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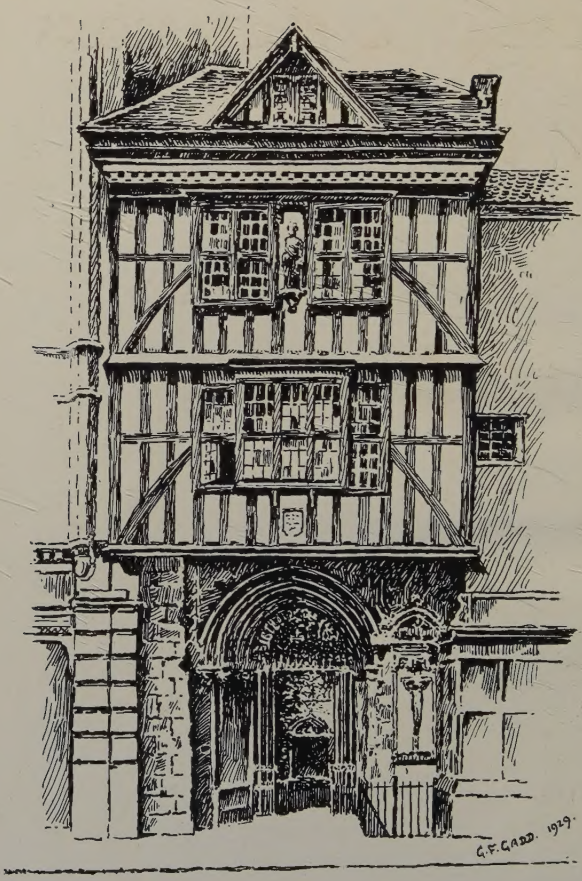
1930

THE
GREAT EXPECTATIONS COUNTRY



IRON GATE TO BARTHOLOMEW CLOSE

Frontispiece

THE GREAT EXPECTATIONS COUNTRY

BY
W. LAURENCE GADD

ILLUSTRATED WITH DRAWINGS BY
GEORGE F. GADD

CECIL PALMER
FORTY-NINE
CHANDOS
STREET
W.C.
2

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RIGHT
1929

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PREFACE

In this little book I have endeavoured to follow the hero of *Great Expectations* through some of the journeys incidental to his chequered career, and to set forth some account of the localities and constructions referred to in what, I think, is generally recognised as one of Dickens's most admirable novels. I have done this in the belief that the reader's interest in the master's work cannot fail to be enhanced by a knowledge of the actual or probable scenes that the great novelist had in his mind's eye, and to that end I have followed the course of taking for granted no previous identifications that were capable of verification or correction by personal research and investigation, knowing how easily a careless remark may, by frequent repetition, become accepted as an informed statement.

Of course, it is possible that certain of my conclusions may arouse differences of opinion, and I lay no claim to infallibility, especially as the lapse of time has rendered the identification of Dickens landmarks increasingly difficult; but I submit this book to the Dickensian public with some confidence, as being the outcome of several years of patient and painstaking investigation in the localities.

W. L. G.

Gravesend, 1929.

I

THE "GREAT EXPECTATIONS" COUNTRY

"Ours was the marsh country, down by the river, within, as the river wound, twenty miles of the sea."

THE marsh country, where Pip's early life was spent, comprises a good part of the Hoo Peninsula, a tongue of land between the rivers Thames and Medway, where they converge at the broad estuary of the former. It is, perhaps, the least known portion of the county of Kent, and is little visited even in these days of road-travel and touring, although the advent of motor-buses running from Rochester to Hoo and Grain, and from Gravesend to Cliffe, has probably brought more strangers into this corner of Kent, during the last two or three years, than it has known in all its previous history. For the Hundred of Hoo seems to have been a backwater, and off the beaten track from time immemorial.

According to a very old rhyme :—

"He that rideth in the Hundred of Hoo,
Besides pilfering seamen, will find dirt enew."

And the writers of guide-books and touring manuals appear to have been of one mind in advising the traveller to shun this piece of country like the plague, as containing nothing of sufficient interest to repay even a casual visit.

The modern tourist still largely accepts the advice, and hurries along to Rochester by the new arterial road (that was once a part of the old Red Royal Dover Road), with no curiosity concerning

the wooded hills and valleys, and the broad expanse of flat marshes, stretching away to the distant sparkling river, which he can see from the high ground about Gad's Hill.

And yet, this same piece of country has a charm and an interest peculiar to itself. It always seems to me to be unlike any other part of Kent. The high land that forms a ridge or backbone in the centre of the peninsula, extending almost to its extremity and the Island of Grain, is thickly wooded in many places; and the slopes leading down on either side to the marshes and the mud flats or saltings of the Thames or the Medway, are luxuriant with hops, cherries, apples and cornfields which do not look exactly like the orchards and farm lands further south.

Perhaps it is the ever present marshes and the wide rivers bounding the prospect on either hand, that impart this different aspect to the country; perhaps it is the scarcity of human beings, beyond the ordinary sparse agricultural inhabitants, and the unchanged quaint little churches and taverns, and the ancient cottages and wooden houses in the scattered villages and hamlets; or perhaps it is because the Spirit of Dickens and *Great Expectations* pervades the land. Whatever it is, the charm and attraction of the district grow upon me the more intimately I know it.

The Hundred of Hoo is an interesting piece of country, if only for the picturesque and ancient churches it contains. All are very old, and being built, for the most part, of chalk and flints, have suffered little re-building or restoration since the Middle Ages. Most of the ten or twelve churches in the Hundred date back to the 12th century, or earlier, and remain to-day almost as they were in Norman or Early English times.

The peninsula also boasts of one mediæval castle, a moated stronghold at Cooling, built by Sir John de Cobham in 1387, and besieged by Sir Thomas Wyatt in 1554. The damage done at that siege was never repaired, and a considerable portion of the curtain walls is in a more or less ruinous condition, but the very fine machicolated towers of the main gate-way still stand as a monument to the castle's past glory.

The eastern tower bears an escutcheon, the legend upon which can be easily deciphered. It runs thus :—

> " Knoweth that beth and schul be,
> That i am mad in helpe of the Cuntree.
> In knowing of whyche thyng
> Thys is chartre and wytnessing."

The castle covers eight acres of ground and within the main gate there is a house of modern appearance, strangely contrasting with the massive grey walls surrounding it. When Dickens lived at Gad's Hill, the house in the castle was occupied by a wealthy farmer named Merton. In the latter part of the 18th century it belonged to Michael Comport, whose initials are to be seen cut in a metal standard over one of the towers, and of whom more anon.

The roads in the Hundred of Hoo have been widened in places during the last three or four years, and are generally of good surface; but, mostly, they are still narrow and winding, enclosed between high banks and hedges, and of no use to the speed merchant. There is a piece of road, just east of the little hamlet of Cooling, which I suppose is the curliest bit of road in all Kent. At any rate, I do not know of any other with which to compare it, and I think I am acquainted with most of the by-ways in the

County. In the space of half-a-mile or so, as the crow flies, the only road through Cooling to High Halstow turns and twists and doubles back upon itself some eight or ten times, in the most extraordinary manner. The motorist who ventures on this road is not likely to encounter much traffic, but as the road is narrow, and enclosed between hedges and orchards, and as he might possibly meet a farmer's cart, it is advisable to proceed with due caution.

Moreover, the roads in the Peninsula lead to nowhere except the Isle of Grain, where the motorist must turn back and retrace his tracks.

Grain Island was really an island at one time, being separated from the main land by the Yantlett creek, at high tide quite a wide piece of water, navigable by small craft. The creek has been filled in at two places to carry the road and the single-track railway to Port Victoria.

At Grain, there is a small village, with an ancient church and a good inn; also a fort, which is part of the Thames Defences, and a Martello Tower, a relic of the Napoleonic period.

Across the broad waters of the Medway, which here joins the Thames, lies Sheerness, with its dockyard, guard-ship and sometimes a number of Cruisers and Destroyers lying in the stream. Seven miles out, to the East North-East, the Nore light-ship bobs and dips at her anchorage, whilst to the left, a procession of ships, great and small, passes up and down the Thames fairway, engaged in the sea-borne commerce of the Empire.

But the marshes are the distinctive feature of the Hundred of Hoo, and I think Dickens must have felt something of their fascination when he made them the scene of the opening chapters of *Great Expectations*. From Higham to the Yant-

lett, they are nowhere less than a mile, and in many places nearer three miles, in width. Broad, open, breezy expanses, with the tang of the sea in the air; the home of the heron (though these birds are getting scarcer), the wild duck, and other water-fowl, that frequent the "fleets"; which, I will add, lest you do not know, are pools or lakes of water, fringed with rushes and such-like vegetation.

Everywhere, the marshes are intersected by wide and deep ditches, full of water and soft mud, so that, although they appear from a distance to form a great flat plain, covered with coarse grass and reeds, it is almost impossible to cross them without a guide, or local knowledge of the practicable way.

At one time, of course, the tidal water overspread the waste to the foot of the hills, but it has been kept out for generations by the mud sea-wall, which, I believe, was first constructed by imported Dutch experts in dyke-building, about the time of the Merrie Monarch. Over the sea-wall, the masts and funnels of ships, and the brown sails of distant barges, are seen, giving the appearance, mentioned by Pip in *Great Expectations*, of ships growing out of the marsh.

In the Summer time, when the sun shines on the distant river and its ships, and lights up the varying colours of the wide marshes, and the scattered cattle and sheep feeding upon them, the prospect is singularly attractive. One may then expand one's lungs with the fresh sea air, and revel in the wide spaciousness of it all.

Pip's first impressions of the marshes were obtained on a raw, bleak Christmas Eve, and the marshes in winter take on another and a different aspect. Not many people are to be seen on them

at any time, but in the winter they are avoided entirely, except by a stray shepherd or so, whose business necessarily takes him out on the dreary and misty waste.

For then the marshes are usually foggy, and decidedly swampy, which adds to the difficulty of finding the way over them. Pip knew a fairly straight way to the old Battery, and successfully negotiated a mile-and-a-half of marshland on a misty Christmas morning, when he took a file and some food to the escaped convict. I know the way over certain portions of the marshes myself; that is, in daylight, for I doubt if I could find my way back to civilisation if out at night, or in a fog, because there are no paths or well-defined tracks except those made by the sheep, and if you follow those, you are likely to land yourself in difficulties.

This reminds me that I very nearly wrecked my reputation some three or four winters ago, when I undertook to guide two enthusiastic Dickensians from the lonely church on the marshes to that same old Battery. I think it was in December, and we reached the Battery without difficulty, but on the return journey we were caught in a heavy rain-storm, with darkness coming on, and the mists rising thickly from the sodden ground. Consequently, I missed the way for a time, and we were several times brought up, all standing, by broad ditches, probably six or eight feet deep in water and soft mud, which we were not altogether disposed to swim across. Not that we should have been in much worse case if we had, for when we finally reached Higham station, after dark, we were very nearly in the same state as Pip's convict, soaked with water and smothered with mud from head to foot. My ungrateful

friends wanted to make out afterwards (this was when their clothes were being dried and they were masquerading in borrowed plumes) that I had slipped down at full length, whereas my own impression was that it was they who had been sprawling on mother earth. Perhaps we all had!

Since the days when Dickens described them, the marshes have been invaded by the march of industrial progress, in the shape of two or three cement factories in the neighbourhood of Cliffe—a noted place for smugglers a hundred or more years ago—where the chalk-lands come down to the margin of the marshes. When visualising the marshes of *Great Expectations*, these blots upon the landscape have to be ignored and considered to be non-existent.

Lime was burned at Cliffe, long before Dickens knew the place, and several small lime-kilns were in use, at the foot of the chalk-cliff, when he wrote about Pip and Joe, and Miss Havisham. He made use of one of them for the purpose of his story, but the topographical features of the tale were not all derived from the Thames marshes, where he placed them.

One or two were imported from the Medway marshes, on the other side of the Peninsula, but, for the rest, Dickens's pictures of the country are wonderfully true to nature, especially in little details that may easily escape the casual visitor, but which make the scenes so real to those who are familiar with the country in all its aspects. How true this is may be inferred from a conversation I once had with an intelligent inhabitant of Cliffe. At the time, I was trying to discover the little lime-kiln, whose ghostly smoke Pip noted on his way to the sluice-house on the night when he so nearly met his death at the hands of Orlick. In

the course of my enquiries, I asked this man (who had lived on the marshes all his life) about any old lime-kilns known to him in his younger days, and was rather surprised to be asked "Is it the lime-kiln in *Great Expectations* you are looking for?"

He told me he had read the book several times, as it was all about that district; so, having a reason for my question, I said, "Now, tell me; you have read the book, and you are familiar with the marsh country. Do the descriptions in the book indicate to you any particular place as Pip's village—Cooling, for instance?" His reply was, "Is it supposed to be Cooling? Why, it is Lower Higham."

He had no doubt about it at all, and had derived his impression entirely from Dickens's descriptions.

Of course, I agreed that he was right and was glad to have my own opinion so positively confirmed.

II

CHALK AND LOWER HIGHAM

> "Joe's forge adjoined our house, which was a wooden house, as many of the dwellings in our country were—most of them, at that time."

FOR the Dickensian, the marsh country of *Great Expectations* begins at Chalk, a village on the old Dover Road, about a mile and a half from Gravesend, in the Rochester direction.

Here is the original of Joe Gargery's forge, standing at a corner formed by the Dover Road and a little lane leading towards Singlewell and Cobham. The house, which is a wooden one, roofed with old red tiles, adjoins the forge, and faces the lane aforesaid; and the little garden, twice particularly mentioned by Pip, was by the side of the lane, from which it was separated by a hedge. The garden has now disappeared, and most of the hedge with it, which is a pity, because the place has thus lost a good deal of its former rustic beauty.

The forge itself is also of weather-board, and is roofed with tiles, like the house. The "windows" consist of two fairly large square openings in the front, without sashes or panes, and are closed by wooden shutters when the forge is shut up. In the latter part of Pip's apprenticeship to Joe, he would sometimes, when thinking of Estella, "look towards those panels of black night in the wall which the wooden windows then were," and would fancy that he saw her just drawing her face away, and would believe that she had come at last.

The main entrance to the forge is through a

lean-to wooden annexe, in which farm horses stand to be shod.

A few years since, the south end of the house, with the door leading to the garden, fell down, and was rebuilt with brick and cement—an affront to one's susceptibilities, since the rest of the house is of timber and weather-board ; but it is not my house, nor, as yet, a National Monument, so I suppose no action will follow this protest.

In Pip's day, the garden door was the only one in common use, the door in the front of the house being unlocked only on State occasions. My observation leads me to the belief that the practice is still adhered to.

The door in the kitchen, communicating with the forge, is now screwed up and papered over on the house side. Consequently, there is no sign of it in the kitchen, but in the forge it can still be seen intact, with its massive hinges and large lock and key. I remember that on my first visit to the house, the forge itself was shut up, probably on account of a holiday, and I was very disappointed to see no communicating door in the kitchen, the one thing I felt sure ought to be there. The old lady who kindly shewed me over the house, assured me there was no such door as I described, and I left with a distinct sense of having missed a friend I had expected to meet, However, I discovered where the blacksmith was—he does not live at the forge now, but in a very ordinary suburban little brick villa—and expressed my disappointment to him. He promptly asked if I would like to see the door, and then and there we went over, and he unlocked the forge. It is a typical country forge, where they still shoe horses in the old way and it is well worth seeing, apart from its Dickens associations.

There is another door, beside those I have mentioned, and this leads from the forge into the yard, where stacks of old horseshoes and piles of rusty iron are usually stored. We can picture the coughing and gasping Mr. Pumblechook plunging headlong through this door, after he had inadvertently swallowed a generous dose of Tar-water.

If you are privileged to enter the kitchen, and are a very ardent Dickensian, you may be a little disappointed to find that the old open fireplace, with its seats in the chimney corner, where honest Joe Gargery used to sit of nights with Pip on a stool beside him, has been modernised, and is now a very ordinary kitchener with a narrow chimney. The present owner of the forge, whose family have been in occupation for two or three generations, says the open chimney was too draughty. He remembers it, however, for he was born and bred in the house, as he will tell you ; and, being a Dickensian himself, he is always obliging to visitors and pilgrims. He delights to shew you an orange-coloured riband or sash, given to his father by Dickens himself, on the occasion of some village sports at Gad's Hill Place.

The alteration of the kitchen chimney has also rendered unintelligible one portion of Mr. Pumblechook's ingenious theory as to the robbery of the pantry. After carefully surveying the premises, he gave out that :—

> " The convict had first got upon the roof of the forge, and had then got upon the roof of the house, and had then let himself down the kitchen chimney by a rope made of his bedding, cut into strips."

It is very easy to get upon the roof of the forge, which comes down at the back to within about four feet of the ground, and from that to get upon the roof of the house ; but a convict would be

hard put to it to let himself down the now existing kitchen chimney, with or without a rope.

Speaking of the open fireplace reminds me of Pip's first letter to Joe, written in the chimney corner. There is a curious epitaph on a tombstone in the churchyard at Hoo, remarkably like Pip's letter, in the matter of spelling and the use of capital letters, and I have speculated on Dickens having seen this tombstone, and derived from it the idea of Pip's first written communication. The inscription on the tombstone reads as follows :—

> " And wHen he Died you plainly see
> Hee freely gave . al . to Sarah. passa Wee
> And in Doing . so . it DoTh prevail
> That Ion . him can well besTow this Ragel.
> On Year sarved him . it is well-none
> BuT Thanks beto God. it is all—my one."

I have been told that about the time when Dickens lived at Gad's Hill, and was acquainted with the blacksmith at Chalk, the latter employed a journeyman blacksmith very like the description of Dolge Orlick, with the difference that the real man was not at all a morose individual, but on the contrary, quite good-tempered and mild. I have not been able to verify this statement, but Mr. Mullender, the present blacksmith, tells me that his grandmother, who resided in the village from 1828 until her death in 1909, used to tell him about a morose and disagreeable journeyman they had at the forge during her early years there.

There was a song of which Joe used to hum fragments, when at work in the forge, the burden being " Old Clem."

This was a recollection of Dickens's early boyhood, for it was a song and chorus the blacksmiths of Chatham Dockyard used to sing at that time, when they walked in procession on Saint

Joe Gargery's Forge

Clement's day. Dickens's books contain many references to experiences, trifling and otherwise, gathered during his early life, and retained in his memory until long afterwards.

Leaving Joe Gargery's forge, and passing through the village, we find that the road to the marshes and to Lower Higham, which latter was Pip's village, forks to the left at the little wooden cottage in which Dickens spent his honeymoon, in April 1836, what time he was writing the earlier chapters of a book that was to make him famous,—the *Pickwick Papers*. His landlady at the Chalk cottage was a Mrs. Craddock, and he gave her name to the landlady of the lodgings in the Royal Crescent at Bath, where Mr. Winkle had a night adventure.

The marsh road from Chalk runs by East Chalk and Filborough (both places consisting only of two or three cottages and farm buildings), and keeping to the lower slopes of the hills, brings us, after three or four miles, to Chequers Street, Lower Higham.

Here we cross a narrow bridge over the railway line, and observe that the canal from Gravesend has become a mere shallow creek, that presently comes to an end. Before the canal was made, the road entered Chequers Street from the west, by what is now a sort of cul-de-sac but was once the most important part of the village.

The canal itself originally connected the Thames at Gravesend with the Medway at Strood, passing through a tunnel, about two-and-a-half miles long, between Higham and the latter town. About 1844, it was acquired by the South Eastern Railway Company, who filled it in between the two places in order to carry the rails through the existing tunnel.

other cottages, about the time the new Chequers Inn was built, in 1900 or 1901.

The wheelwright's workshop and yard still remain. They were formerly in the by-lane from Gore Green to the church road, but have since been moved to the church road itself. When I pass the wheelwright's, I always think of it as Mr. Hubble's place, and am quite content with that designation, so have never troubled to note the real name of the wheelwright of Lower Higham. If I knew it, the glamour of his wooden workshop might suffer some diminution, so I prefer to regard him as Mr. Hubble, and invest him with an importance he might not otherwise possess. Dickens was thinking of the wheelwright's in its former position when he wrote :—

> " I supposed my declaration that I was to walk in the same all the days of my life, laid me under an obligation always to go through the village from our house in one particular direction, and never to vary it by turning down by the wheelwright's or up by the mill."

As the period of Dickens's story was pre-Victorian, and in the days of stage-coaches, the railway was, of course, not in existence. Therefore, when I see the village with the eyes of Pip or Mr. Hubble, the railway has no existence for me.

The village of Lower Higham is on the flat inshore, a mile from the church, and almost exactly four miles from Rochester, which was the country town of the story. In Pip's day, and I dare say for many years afterwards, the villagers walked that four miles whenever they required to visit the town ; and a very pleasant country walk it is, until you descend steeply into Strood.

It will be recalled that after Pip's first experience at Satis House, he went to Mr. Pumblechook's

shop in the High Street, and was relieved to find that the worthy corn and seedsman was not at home. So, leaving word with the shopman on what day he would be expected at Miss Havisham's again, he set off on the four mile walk to the forge. I must leave this road for the present, however, and finish with the village.

Except for a fine old farmhouse, on the rising ground, the most important looking building in Chequers Street is the Chequers Inn, on the site of the old Chequers, which was the original of the "Three Jolly Bargemen," where Joe Gargery liked sometimes to smoke his pipe of an evening. The old "Chequers" was a picturesque wooden hostelry, with a red-tiled roof, tall chimneys, and an old-fashioned interior; full of narrow passages and low-ceilinged rooms lighted by little small-paned lattices. The bar, in which were chalked scores against the customers, some of them longer than Pip himself, was slightly lower than the road level, and was entered by descending a step or two.

Mine host of the present Chequers has a faded photograph of the old tavern known to Dickens, which he will readily produce on request, and from which we can see what the exterior of the "Three Jolly Bargemen" was like. The interior arrangements have to be imagined.

Here it was that Pip received the bright new shilling, wrapped in two greasy one-pound notes, from the mysterious stranger who pointedly stirred his drink with a file. Also in the little bar parlour, Mr. Wopsle was severely put down by Mr. Jaggers, when the lawyer went to announce Pip's good fortune. I think Dickens's account of this scene is a delightful one. Possibly I can picture it the more vividly because my vagabond

tendencies impel me to view the interiors of all the quaint inns and taverns I come across in the course of my wanderings about the countryside, and to hob-nob with the agricultural characters (I don't mean in the Jerry Cruncher sense), usually to be found in them. The village cronies sitting upon wooden settles round the blazing log fire, in the dimly-lighted low parlour with a sanded floor; and Mr. Wopsle in large spectacles portentously reading aloud from a thumbed and worn newspaper—a much scarcer commodity in those days than now; the feebleness of the same Wopsle when cross-examined by Mr. Jaggers, and the awe-stricken expression on the faces of the yokels comprising the audience, all come before me with irresistible humour, when I read this particular chapter.

The name given by Dickens to the inn is, of course, a fictitious one, and may have been suggested by that of the "Three Merry Boys," a tavern below Chattenden Woods, not far away; or by some other of several such inn-signs in this part of the country, *e.g.* the "Three Gardeners" at Strood; the "Three Daws" at Gravesend; or the "Three Crutches" on Watling Street, not far from Gad's Hill Place.

Lower Higham is a very old place, historically, and its name has been variously spelt as Hecham, Hegham, and Heaham, in ancient documents, mostly connected with the Abbey founded there by King Stephen. A considerable quantity of Roman urns and vases was unearthed there when the canal was dug in 1824 and it is known that there was an extensive Roman pottery on the marshes between Higham and Cliffe. In 1912 a curious round hollow flint, highly polished on the outside, and containing eleven gold coins, was

dug up at Hillyfield, near by. The coins are computed to be of the date 359 to 336 B.C., and the flint receptacle is probably the most ancient purse known.

Long ago there was a ford across the Thames from near Lower Higham to East Tilbury, on the Essex shore, and it is said that the Roman general Plantius pursued the flying ancient Britons across it in A.D. 43. The Romans constructed a raised bank or causeway over the marshes from the ford to the higher ground below Gad's Hill, whence a road, now known as Pear Tree Lane, led to Watling Street. The causeway has probably sunk into the marsh ages ago. I do not know of any trace of it remaining to-day.

III

THE CHURCH AND THE MARSHES

> "How far might you call yourselves from the marshes, hereabouts? Not above a mile, I reckon? 'Just a mile,' said Mrs. Joe."

FROM the Chequers Inn, a lane leads almost due north to the church and the marshes exactly a mile away, and this is the only practicable way from the village to the marshes.

To-day, there are houses upon this road as well as upon the winding lane from Gore Green, but none of these was built until twenty years or more after *Great Expectations* was written, and in Dickens's time, there were no houses or buildings of any kind on this mile-long length of road.

The surface and condition of the lane are much improved since Dickens wrote :—

> "We were joined by no stragglers from the village, for the weather was cold and threatening, the way dreary, the footing bad, darkness coming on, and the people had good fires in-doors and were keeping the day."

But assuming a cold, dull, wintry evening, the description is still sufficiently apt.

On the left hand, the marshes stretch away towards Higham Bight, and to a beacon light on the edge of the river, a mile and a half distant. On the right hand are farm lands reaching back to the flat in-shore where the village lies ; but the view in either direction is largely impeded by the banks and hedges, and by a new apple orchard, lining the sides of the lane. A little short of the church, the road dips down towards the marsh

level, and from this point the first view of the wide expanse of marshes in front, with the masts and funnels of distant ships, and the brown sails of barges apparently growing out of them, is obtained. As Pip said, when describing his sister's funeral :—

> "And now the range of marshes lay clear before us, with the sails of the ships growing out of it, and we went into the churchyard, close to the graves of my unknown parents, Philip Pirrip, late of this parish, and also Georgiana, wife of the above."

And so we come to the lonely church on the marshes, where Mrs. Joe was buried, and where Pip first encountered the escaped convict, who afterwards became the founder of his great expectations. This is the church of St. Mary the Virgin, Dickens's own parish church, when he resided at Gad's Hill. Like other churches in the Hoo peninsula, it is built chiefly of flints set in mortar, and is roofed with old tiles, once red but now mellowed with age. A short time since, the roof timbers had to be repaired, as they were in a shaky condition, but the old tiles were carefully replaced in their original positions.

With one exception, all the other churches in the peninsula, like the majority of the churches in the county of Kent, have square stone towers, but Lower Higham church has a quaint timber steeple, shingled with tiles, and looking like an old-fashioned candle-extinguisher. Pip saw this steeple under his feet when the convict tilted him backwards on the gravestone.

Internally, the church consists of a north and a south aisle, the east end of the north side being probably the oldest part, and obviously of Norman date. A number of Roman tiles can also be seen incorporated in the walls.

At one time there was a separate chapel at the east end, for the use of the nuns of the Abbey founded by King Stephen in 1151, at Lilliechurch, about a mile away, and rebuilt near the church *circa* 1310. The remains of the later Abbey building are incorporated in a farmhouse, a stone's throw from the church, on the east side. The first abbess of the nunnery was Mary, daughter of King Stephen, in 1151.

The church is entered from the south porch by a massive oak door, which is computed to be of the date of 1480, or thereabouts ; and just inside, there is a very fine specimen of a Norman font, the age of which I do not know, but is probably of the eleventh century. The bowl is of lead, and the receptacles in the rim for the candle, and the oil or the salt, are still plainly to be seen.

The nuns' chapel at the east end was separated from the north aisle by an interesting oak screen, which is still intact. This, I suppose, carried the Rood, which was destroyed at the Reformation. In 1517, a certain William Barfelde bequeathed "Too Shepe to fynde a lamp to bren before the Rood loft for evermore," but this lamp does not 'bren' now. Bluff King Hal abolished the Rood not many years afterwards, but I imagine the "too shepe" would hardly have sufficed to keep the lamp going for over 400 years.

The pulpit is also of oak, almost black with age. It was elaborately carved in the days when tools were cruder than they are now, and the tool-marks of the ancient craftsman seem to indicate that the work was mostly done with an adze. The pulpit and the screen are both supposed to be of the period 1490 to 1500 A.D.

There are two very old muniment chests in the chapel, one of iron and the other of wood, bound

with massive wrought-iron bands. Also in the nuns' chapel there is a brass inscribed as follows :

> "Here lyeth Robert Hylton, late yeoman of ye guard. Wh the high and mighty Prince of famous memory Henry VIII. Ye whch departed oute of thys present lyffe the III day of December Anno Dmi MCCCCCXXIII."

There are several other interesting old tombs in the church, that of the abbess Joan de Haldo, who died in 1328, is, however, partly obliterated by the gravestone of a Mrs. Anne Cordewell, dated 1642.

Twenty years since, the churchyard, especially on the north, or marsh side, was much more neglected than now, and I remember that nettles and weeds and rank grass made it a more desolate and dreary spot in winter time than it is at present. The little gate in the wall at the north-east corner of the churchyard was then a very simple affair made of chestnut palings. The present gate, of ecclesiastical design, is a comparatively new one.

The little tombstones—sacred to the memory of Pip's five little brothers, and so shaped as to give Pip himself the odd impression that the children were all born on their backs, with their hands in their trousers pockets—were imported by Dickens from Cooling, just as he transferred Joe's forge from Chalk to Lower Higham.

Cooling is a very small hamlet some three miles or so further east, and beyond Cliffe. It is possible to get to it from Lower Higham Church, on foot, by crossing the marshes in a north-easterly direction to the new Thames cement works, and then by the Nine Elms Lane to Cliffe village ; but any kind of vehicle must return to the winding lane from the church road to Gore Green and then proceed by the road to Cliffe, which is now

almost a town, having grown enormously during the late war, by reason of the manufacture of cordite in the vicinity. The old village of Cliffe is a picturesque little bit close to the church there.

From Cliffe the way to Cooling is fairly direct, if one keeps to the south of the former place, but you may also go through the old village of Cliffe and turning to the right at the " Black Bull " Inn, pursue a winding lane to the finger-post that points the way to Cooling. Just beyond the imposing gateway of the Cooling Castle ruins, stands the church, a few hundred yards from the marshes ; and close by the south porch are the gravestones of Pip's little brothers. Actually there are thirteen of them, ten in one row, and three more behind them, the two rows being separated by an upright tombstone. All belong to the Comport family, one branch of which resided at Cooling Castle in the latter part of the eighteenth century ; but not all the little graves are those of children of this branch.

In his *Life of Dickens* Forster described them as being a dozen small tombstones of various sizes adapted to the respective ages of a dozen children ; but those in the row of ten are all of one size, about three feet long. The other three are slightly larger. Dickens himself described them as each about a foot and a half long. The children buried here all died in infancy, chiefly, I am told, from ague, which was very prevalent in the marsh country at one time, but has now practically disappeared. The local people put this down to the presence of the cement works, but perhaps there are fewer mosquitoes on the marshes than there used to be.

I have not found it possible to make out any inscription or name on the little lozenge-shaped

gravestones, although I have seen a statement that the actual names of Pip's fictitious brothers—Alexander, Bartholomew, Abraham, Tobias and Roger—could be deciphered on them some twenty-five or thirty years ago. This is merely a flight of fancy, for the real names of the children buried at Cooling were :—

In the row of three. West side of Headstone.

1. Ellen Elizabeth Baker. Died August 11, 1854. Aged 5 months.
2. Sarah Anne Baker. Died July 2, 1837. Aged 3 months.
3. John Rose Baker. Died June 9, 1837. Aged 1 month.

These three were the children of John Rose Baker, and his wife Sarah Anne, daughter of Michael Comport of Decoy House.

In the row of ten stones. East side of Headstone.

1. William Comport. Died May 12, 1771. Aged 8 months.
2. William Comport. Died June 7, 1773. Aged 7 months.
3. James Comport. Died October 15, 1777. Aged 4 months.
4. Frances Comport. Died June 7, 1775. Aged 17 months.
5. William Comport. Died March 9, 1799. Aged 8 months.
6. Elizabeth Comport. Died October 5, 1799. Aged 3 months.

These were the children of Michael and Jane Comport, of Cowling Court and Cowling Castle.

7. Sarah Elizabeth, daughter of George Comport, of Glattons House, Cliffe. Died July, 1799. Aged 3 months.

8. Thomas, son of Michael Comport of Decoy House, High Halstow, Died November, 1800. Aged 3 months.
9. Elizabeth, daughter of Michael Comport of Decoy House. Died August, 1792. Aged 12 months.
10. Mary, eldest daughter of Michael and Jane Comport. Born at Cowling Court, October 17, 1767. Died in infancy.

There are six similar small gravestones in High Halstow churchyard; and three others at All Hallows; all to children of this most unlucky family.

Cooling was always called Cowling until sixty or eighty years ago, the name signifying a pasture. The walk to Cooling from Gad's Hill was a favourite one with Dickens, and he often took his friends there to show them the quaint little Comport graves. This particular shape of tombstone is very common in Kent, most churchyards containing several. There are seventeen of them in Lower Higham Churchyard, all, however, larger than those at Cooling and High Halstow.

Lower Higham Church stands on the edge of the marshes, here about a mile and a half wide, from which it was separated only by the low churchyard wall. At the present time, the single-track railway line to Port Victoria runs over the marsh on an embankment, about a hundred yards from the church, and the space between is now dry; but in 1860, when Dickens described the lonely church on the marshes, the sea wall west of Cliffe Creek was not built, and the marshes here were little better than saltings, subject to inundation at high water. The wet marsh thus reached up to the churchyard wall, and lumps of chalk were

THE "THREE JOLLY BARGEMEN"

thrown down in it to serve as stepping stones, "when the rains were heavy or the tide was in."

On the south side of the church, there are a few old timber cottages, comprising the hamlet of Church Street, Lower Higham. Some of them, I understand, are comparatively recent, but none of them can be seen from the marsh side of the church, and probably Dickens, with the licence of an author, considered them to be non-existent, for the purpose of his story.

Notwithstanding the proximity of these cottages, the church is still sufficiently remote and isolated to agree with Dickens's description of it as a lonely church on the marshes. Nothing can be seen of the village, from the churchyard, except the recently built houses on the church road, and if Pip were asked by the convict to-day, to shew where he lived, he would still need to point to—"where our village lay, on the flat inshore among the alder trees and the pollards, a mile or more from the church."

Looking over the low churchyard wall, Pip saw the beacon by which the sailors steered; and the gibbet, with its rusty chains that had once held a pirate; and the mound of the old battery; all on the edge of the river, beyond the flat wilderness. In place of the mound of the battery, we now see the walls of Cliffe fort, a defensive work built by General Gordon, in 1869 or 1870, on the site of the old battery or bulwark erected by Henry the Eighth, in 1539. This last, perhaps, one of the earliest forts erected for the defence of the Thames.

The old battery was demolished about the time of Dickens's death, being marked on General Gordon's original plans for the new fort as "Old work to be removed." Thereabouts, the river

wall is largely composed of big stones and pieces of rock, forming a distinct feature of the river bank at Cliffe fort, as there are no such stones elsewhere for some miles on either side. Some of them may be the remains of the old work removed by the Royal Engineers under Gordon, in 1870, but the old battery must have been partly demolished when Dickens knew it, for Pip had to try back over the loose stones when he lost his way in the fog, on that Christmas morning, and found himself too far to the east of the battery, where the convict awaited him.

In the days when Dickens knew it, the old battery probably consisted of a number of grass-grown mounds of earth, covering what remained of the old masonry; and here it was that Pip and Joe Gargery pursued their studies on those memorable Sunday afternoons in the summer; when the ships sailed past them within a short distance—the deep water being on that side of the river. The spot was far away from human habitation and the only other moving things were the sea-gulls, and the scattered cattle feeding on the marshes.

Cliffe fort stands on a piece of slightly elevated land between the tidal waters of Higham and Cliffe creeks. The latter is about one hundred yards from the site of the old battery, and the beacon, by which the sailors steered, stood at the mouth of this creek, on the north side. There has been a beacon here, of one sort or another, for ages, the first being put up by command of King Richard the Second about the year 1377, not as an aid to navigation but as an alarm signal. The earliest type of beacon consisted of a stout pole, surmounted by an iron cage containing combustibles, so that (in the words of Hasted, the

Kent historian), "by the firing of them notice might be given of any sudden attempt by the enemy."

In after years, the beacons were used solely as navigation marks, and the iron cages were replaced by skeleton balls, perhaps as being more distinctly visible. One or two of this type are still to be seen along the lower reaches of the Thames, but Dickens evidently had the earlier type in mind when he wrote *Great Expectations*, and described the beacon as being like an unhooped cask on a pole.

Within my own recollection, the beacon at Cliffe Creek was merely a large flat disc on a pole, with certain wooden struts and props to strengthen it. I made two or three attempts to photograph it in 1924, but never got a satisfactory negative, owing to the mists which always rose after I had toiled over the marshes with my impedimenta, and reached the spot. So I told myself that I would wait until the following summer, when I would surely get a good picture. However, it turned out to be an occasion when a certain moral lesson inculcated by Mr. Squeers proved peculiarly applicable. Like Master Belling, I never performed the business, for the beacon was blown down and washed away during a heavy gale in January, 1925; and has never been replaced. Nevertheless, I have a picture of it in my mind's eye, for I well remember how it stood up on the edge of the distant river—a tall black object silhouetted against the sunset glow in the north-west, when seen from the churchyard on a wintry evening over a dreary waste of marsh.

In *Great Expectations*, Dickens placed a gibbet (that had once held a pirate) somewhere near the

old battery and the beacon, and Pip saw this also from the churchyard.

At the beginning of the 19th century, there were several gibbets of this nature along the Thames, the nearest being one on the river bank between Gravesend and Northfleet.

When Dickens was a boy at Chatham, there was a gibbet on the Medway marshes, a little above Upnor Castle, and probably he saw this when he went with his father to Chatham Dockyard. I think the gibbet he placed on the Thames marshes, in *Great Expectations*, was a recollection of the one at Chatham, which he had known in his youth; but I remember that, many years ago, there was, near the beacon at Cliffe Creek, an old cannon, up-ended and buried in the mud, with a long stout pole thrust into its muzzle. Nobody knew its origin or use, but when picturing the marshes of *Great Expectations*, I like to see in it the remains of the gaunt and forbidding gibbet that Magwitch vowed he would cheat, until after he had eaten his breakfast.

However, this object has now disappeared, and there is no gibbet on the Thames marshes to-day. The one that used to be opposite Chatham dockyard also disappeared long ago, so if we wish to see what a gibbet looked like, we must refer to old prints and drawings in which they are depicted. I have seen an old print of Chatham Reach, in which the gibbet opposite the dockyard is shewn complete, with the body of a pirate dangling from it.

IV

THE MARSHES (*continued*)

"If I slept at all that night, it was only to imagine myself drifting down the river on a strong Spring-tide, to the Hulks."

THE Hulks, or prison-ship in which Magwitch was confined, and from which he escaped, was placed by Dickens at Egypt Bay, some five miles down the river from the church, and four miles from the old battery.

The River Thames is very shallow along the Kentish shore by the marsh country and the receding tide uncovers a vast expanse of mud-flats, in some places extending to half of the total width of the river. These flats are officially known as the Blyth Sands but there is precious little sand about them, except in one or two places, such as the sand and shell-beaches at All Hallows and Grain Island. Generally speaking, the Blyth Sands are nothing but soft mud, in which you sink to your knees, if by any chance your boat runs aground and you have to wade. Consequently, there are only three places, on a stretch of ten or twelve miles of coast-line, where a hulk of any kind could be moored. These places are the mouths of Higham and Cliffe Creeks, in the Lower Hope, and at Egypt Bay in Sea Reach. Egypt Bay is a small inlet to the north of High Halstow, and is now very shallow, but in Dickens's time it had sufficient depth of water to permit the mooring of a hulk—a coastguard ship named, I think, the "Swallow."

In connection with this hulk, there was a wooden guard-hut on the river bank, and a rough landing stage to accommodate the ship's boats; but hulk, hut and landing stage have all disappeared and there is now nothing at Egypt Bay to associate the spot with *Great Expectations*. The original of the Hulk in that book was, however, the coastguard hulk which was at Egypt Bay in the early part of last century, although Dickens converted it into a convict ship, utilising the existing guard-hut and landing stage. It was the original in the topographical sense, as being the actual hulk on the spot; but the prison ship Dickens described was one of three convict hulks that were moored in the Medway off Upnor Castle until later than 1823, when Dickens was a boy living at Chatham. No doubt he often saw those hulks at that time and also the heavily manacled convicts who were brought down from London on stage coaches, even as the two convicts were carried down on the coach by which Pip once travelled when on a visit to Miss Havisham at Satis House.

The convict ships at Chatham were the "Euryalus" and the "Canada," old wooden frigates converted into prisons; and the "Hercules," a floating hospital for the convicts. The ships had no masts or top-hamper, but were just floating hulks with the decks roofed over, like the roof of a house, and looking like a child's Noah's Ark.

Such prisoners who died on the hulks, were buried in the marsh, near Tower Hill, where the R.E. pontoon yard now is, and close to the spot where the Chatham mammoth was dug up in 1916. There was a burial ground called "Prisoners' Bank" at St. Mary Island, on the opposite side

of the river, but this had nothing to do with the convicts. It was in fact the burial place of hundreds of prisoners of war, who were confined at Chatham during the French wars at the beginning of the 19th century.

When describing the route taken by the party of soldiers who went out to effect the re-capture of the escaped convicts, Dickens indicated the way from Lower Higham to Egypt Bay almost with the accuracy of a guide book, and it will be interesting to follow in that party's foot-steps, just as Mr. Wopsle, of the Roman nose, and Joe Gargery, with Pip on his back, followed at the time.

They were joined by no stragglers from the village and held straight on to the churchyard, by the road I have previously mentioned. Arrived at the church, there was a halt, while the soldiers searched among the graves, and examined the porch. They then struck out upon the open marsh through a gate at the side of the churchyard wall, and encountered a bitter sleet, rattling against them on the east wind.

The gate by the side of the churchyard, which we now see, may not be the actual gate that Dickens himself saw, but there has always been a gate here (to prevent the cattle from straying from the marshes on to the road, and to the village) so it will answer our purpose.

The soldiers were now extended in open order, and were moving in the direction taken by Pip earlier in the day, towards the beacon and the gibbet, and the mound of the old battery; all seen on the sky-line, with the river and its opposite shore, in the glare of the sunset, though of a watery, leaden colour. The way from the church to the old battery is first north, and then north-

westerly, to the river bank at Higham Creek, which is followed to near Cliffe fort; but before reaching the old battery, the party heard shouts from the east, so they turned to the right (where the east was) and struck straight across the marshes towards the sounds.

I imagine the place, where they found the two convicts struggling at the bottom of a ditch, to be somewhere a little east of the modern military road to Cliffe fort, and short of Cliffe Creek; because having secured the convicts, the party very soon got upon the sea-wall, where there was a reasonably good path at the edge of the river, with a divergence here and there, when a dyke came. To reach the river side, they must have passed round the head of Cliffe Creek, and almost under the shadow of the beacon.

We are told that the convicts could not walk very fast, on account of their lameness, but that after an hour or so of travelling they came to the hut and the landing-stage, and saw the convict ship lying out a little way from the bank, moored with rusty chains, and looking like a wicked Noah's Ark.

The distance from Cliffe Creek to Egypt Bay is about three miles, and as the way is for the most part on slippery mud, it takes me an hour or so to cover it, as it did the party, of which Pip was one.

It may be considered a drawback to this little excursion that there is nothing to see, when you arrive, except, on the one hand, a broad river—mostly mud, at low tide—and on the other hand, a waste of equally wide flat marshes, beyond which the wooded promontory, Northwood Hill (on which sits the hamlet of High Halstow), and the hills to right and left of it seem to rise abruptly from the plain. But if you like solitude,

and fresh air, and open spaces, the trip is worth while.

The sluice-house, where Pip nearly met his death at the hands of Orlick, was, and is, close to the head of Cliffe Creek. I suppose it was called the sluice-house because it stood beside the sluice-gates that connected the creek with a mile-long canal cut across the marshes to a chalk quarry some distance to the west of Cliffe village. Long before Dickens knew the place, there were several lime-kilns at this quarry, in which the chalk was burned to lime and the product conveyed in horse drawn lighters, along the canal, to the tidal creek, where it was transhipped into sailing barges for transport up river.

Dickens knew this because in *Our Mutual Friend*, he makes Mr. Inspector remark :—

> " You can't do better than be interested in some lime-works, anywhere down about Northfleet, and doubtful whether some of your lime don't get into bad company, as it comes up in barges."

The canal over the marshes did not actually connect with the creek, but was closed by sluice-gates which admitted or discharged water through a culvert passing under the sea wall. It was filled up many years since, but its course can be easily traced. The sluice-gates have disappeared, or have been buried, but the sluice hut remains, and the wharf from which the lime was loaded into barges, is still represented by a few leaning piles and rotting timbers, gradually sinking down into the mud and ooze of the creek.

The sluice house hardly looks old enough to have been exposed to the winds and rains of the open marsh for more than sixty or seventy years, and for some time, I doubted it as the original of Orlick's sluice house; but so many inhabitants

have been positive as to its great age, and finally so convincing was the statement of the old man who last worked the sluice-gates before the canal was filled in, that the hut was in existence, and used by himself, when he first worked there as a youth, nearly seventy years ago, that I no longer have room for doubt. There is no question whatever that its position accords with the place assigned to it in *Great Expectations*. It is a mile out on the bleak marsh, close to where the sluice-gates were, and before the cement factory buildings were erected near it about 1866, it must have been a dreary and abandoned object, especially at night.

Pip went to the sluice house from the inn of minor reputation down the town, which town was Rochester. From Rochester his way would take him over the bridge, to the turnpike-gate at Strood, and then by the old Cliffe road to that village. This is about five miles, and as there were no public conveyances on the road at that time, he had to walk. At Cliffe, the road passes through the old village by the church, and dips down to the marshes where it ends at the Pickles-way, a cart track formed along the edge of the marsh, close to the chalk face. The Picklesway is now a paved road, as far as Allen's pond, having been made up about the year 1916 to carry the heavy traffic to the Cordite factory near Lower Hope point, but it was formerly a very rough track indeed, the only attempt at paving being to fill up the worst holes and ruts with loose flints. Beyond Allen's pond (now a semi-dry depression) the way retains its ancient character much to the discomfort of the pedestrian, for the home-coming cattle have worn the track into a series of hummocks, in shape resembling the waves of the sea, and very unpleasant to walk upon.

Taking this marsh track leading from Cliffe, Pip passed close to an isolated little lime-kiln on the edge of the marsh, and at the foot of the chalk. He says :—

> " It was another half an hour before I drew near to the Kiln. The lime was burning with a sluggish, stifling smell, but the fires were made up and left, and no workmen were visible. Hard by was a small stone quarry. It lay directly in my way, and had been worked that day, as I saw by the tools and barrows that were lying about."

The ruins of this little kiln are still in existence, but a few years since I had a good deal of trouble to find the construction, for it was completely buried under thick bushes and rank undergrowth, and had been forgotten for a generation. The vegetation was cleared away in 1924, to enable me to photograph the kiln, but the latter is rapidly being overgrown again, and at my last visit, it was nearly hidden by high nettles and weeds, and by the fresh shoots from the cut down bushes that formerly enveloped it. Also I noticed that the remains of the lime-house, beside the kiln, had been demolished, probably to provide flints to mend an adjacent farm road.

If you wish to find this ruin, the best way is to take the road on the south side of Cliffe Church, along the top of the chalk, to Robertson's farm, a very fine Tudor house with beautiful brick chimneys. The lane ends here at the chalk face, but you can descend to the Picklesway by a rough path on the right hand. One hundred yards on towards Cliffe, the lime-kiln can be found among the bushes just inside a gate at the foot of the cliff.

Beyond the lime-kiln, the cart track continued along the edge of the marsh to the canal, and then

by the side of that waterway to the head of Cliffe creek; but there was a footpath a little beyond the lime-kiln, that struck almost directly across the marsh to the sluice-house, and thus cut off a considerable corner. This path has been somewhat diverted since, on account of the claypits dug in the marshes by the cement people, but it can still be followed. There were various gates across the path—I think there are only two now—and as Pip spoke of shutting certain gates after him, this is probably the way he took, especially as he had already walked over five miles, and the footpath would cut off another mile or so of particularly rough travelling.

This route over the marshes from Cliffe to the sluice-house, agrees with that taken by Pip on his night walk to meet Orlick. It is not in the direction of his old home, nor is it the direction in which the convicts were pursued; and the light on the spit of sand, to the north of Lower Hope Point is (or was, for the light was finally extinguished in 1914), over your right shoulder, if you follow the way indicated.

In *Great Expectations*, Dickens placed the lime-kiln nearer to the sluice-house than it really is. The latter is fully a mile out on the marshes, close to the mud and ooze of the creek, and there were never any lime-kilns on the marsh itself, for obvious reasons. Neither could there be a stone quarry out there, for there is no stone or chalk on the marshes, but only alluvial mud or clay.

Church on the Marshes

V

ROCHESTER, AND THE WAY TO OUR TOWN

> "Beyond town, we found a heavy mist out, and it fell wet and thick. The turnpike lamp was a blur, quite out of the lamp's usual place apparently, and its rays looked solid substance on the fog. We were noticing this, and saying how that the mist rose with a change of wind from a certain quarter of our marshes, when we came upon a man, slouching under the lee of the turnpike house."

I THINK I have mentioned that the village of Lower Higham is just about four miles from Rochester. This is by the most direct way, but there is more than one road. The direct road from the Chequers Inn at Lower Higham is the one running east towards Mockbeggar and Wainscot. This is to be followed as far as the finger-post directing the traveller to take the road that forks to the right, and by this road, one passes over Dusty Hill to the Stonehorse Inn. This is on the old Cliffe road, which ascends for some distance to the high ground above Strood, whence it descends steeply into that town.

Another route is to take the way over the railway bridge at Lower Higham and then proceed up School Lane to the top of Gad's Hill, close to Dickens's house. We are then upon the old Dover road which we follow past the Falstaff Inn to the top of Strood Hill, where it joins the Roman Watling Street, and so into Strood.

When Pip set off from Rochester on the four

mile walk to the forge, he probably took the first road, as being the more direct, and this would be the way usually taken by the villagers when journeying into the market town. Nowadays, I suppose, they travel by motor 'bus between Rochester and the Falstaff at Gad's Hill, and only walk down School Lane into the village.

My sympathies are entirely with them. Writers of books on rural England appear to me to be terrible fellows for walking, and to cover miles and miles of highways and by-ways on foot. I cannot claim so much energy for myself. Being constitutionally lazy in that regard, I prefer to ride, and although I have many times traversed each of the roads from Lower Higham to Rochester, this has generally been done with the aid of wheels.

There is another way from Rochester to the village, which was taken, for quietness' sake, by Pip, when his high fortune had received a heavy fall, and he went to the village for the last time, with the object of offering himself in marriage to Biddy, only to find that she was that day married to Joe Gargery. This way is by the old Cliffe road and the Stonehorse Inn, but instead of turning off to the left, over Dusty Hill to the village, Pip continued along the Cliffe road as far as the lane branching off to Lillychurch farm, and finally by the road, bordered on one side by an orchard, and on the other by a row of lime trees, into Gore Green.

This roundabout way took him past Biddy's school, which was a cottage standing beyond the Stonehorse Inn, and between that and Mockbeggar House. It is marked "School-house" on maps of the *Great Expectations* period, but was burned down some years since. The site is now

occupied by two cottages, known as "School cottages" belonging to the Cliffe charities, the rents being applied to the education of twelve poor children of that place.

Pip found the school-house closed, the day being a holiday, but the forge was not very far off, and he went towards it, under the sweet green limes, listening for the clink of Joe's hammer. The lime trees along the lane from Lillychurch farm to Gore Green have all been cut down in recent years, and only a few of the stumps remain here and there along the hedge-row, but I remember this line of trees quite well, although I am afraid I never noticed particularly whether they were lime trees, or elms.

By whichever of these three ways we travel, from the village to Our Town, we must eventually arrive at the junction of the London and Cliffe roads in Strood. Here stood the turnpike-gate to which Pip made his slumberous way, after a memorable dinner in the parlour behind Mr. Pumblechook's shop, shortly after he had come into his great expectations. The gate-house, with its lamp that on another occasion appeared to Pip to be out of its usual place, on account of the fog, was on the north side of the High Street, adjoining the old Angel Inn, on the site of which is the present "Angel."

The turnpike gate was erected in 1768, and continued in use until 1876, when it was demolished, on November 30th, amid great rejoicings on the part of the townspeople. The event was celebrated, in accordance with ancient British traditions, by a dinner at the Angel Inn, on which occasion Mr. Thomas Wyles, of Stonehorse Vale, obliged the company with a song, written by himself, whereof one verse ran as follows :—

" In the good old days, the Coaching days
Of Chumley, Commodore ;
Of Clements, Nightingale and Boakes,
And many who'd gone before ;
All teamed their fours through this gate and street,
Be it hail, or sun or snow.
Blythe cracked the whip, loud blew the horn,
Let the winds blow high or low.
'Twas a fine old institution,
The old Strood turnpike-gate.

The Commodore mentioned in the above effusion, was, of course, the stage coach of that name, a real coach by which the fictitious Mr. Pickwick and his friends travelled to Rochester. The Chumley referred to was a well-known old coachman who drove the Commodore, or another coach, daily between London and Rochester, and who was confidently identified by many people as the original of Tony Weller, of " Marquis of Granby " and *Pickwick* fame.

I think the last keeper of the turnpike gate was a man named Carter, a large man who had a wooden leg. It is probable that Dickens was acquainted with him, or his immediate predecessor, at any rate by sight.

Half a mile beyond the spot where the turnpike stood, is Rochester bridge, a steel structure, completed in 1914, and, of course, never seen by Dickens.

The first bridge over the Medway was probably the one built by the Romans, about the time they occupied the town, converted the same into a walled city, and named it Durobrivae—which signifies a bridge over water. This bridge was in line with the High Streets of Rochester and Strood, forming a part of Watling Street, and it crossed the river at the same place as does the modern bridge.

Relics of those far-off times, in the shape of some pieces of the pavement of Watling Street, have been discovered in Strood High Street, some feet below the present level. One such piece, measuring about six feet by five, and deeply scored by Roman chariot wheels, is to be seen in the garden at Eastgate House, in Rochester; and three or four of the stout wooden piles that carried the old Roman bridge, were recovered from the bed of the river in the year 1850. These are now kept in the State Dungeon of the Castle Keep.

During the Saxon period, before the Norman Conquest, regulations and ordinances were in force, providing for the upkeep and repair of the bridge by the men of certain named parishes, Hundreds, or districts. Lambarde quotes these regulations from ancient manuscripts collected by Bishop Ernulphus in the early part of the twelfth century. The statutes are still in force, I believe, and in the event of any deficiency in the funds of the Bridge-Wardens, the contributary parishes are liable to make it good.

The Roman bridge was constructed of wood, and was carried on nine piers. It is computed to have been only ten feet wide, and the passengers crossing it were protected by a low fence or railing on each side. Nevertheless, there are several recorded instances of men and horses being blown over into the river, some of the accounts being perhaps mythical, like the legend of the minstrel who fell off the bridge and was carried down the river a league or more, but was miraculously saved from drowning by "Our Lady" in response to his distressful cry :—

"Help wsvyf, help wsvyf,
Oiyer nu—I forga mi lyf."

At the eastern end of the bridge there was a wooden tower and probably a stout gate.

The bridge was considerably damaged during the siege of Rochester Castle by King John, in 1215; and in 1264 Simon de Montfort set it on fire, by drifting fire-ships against it, whereby a great part of the wood-work was destroyed.

From that time the repair of the structure seems to have been much neglected for many years, despite the statutes providing for it, until Edward the Third appointed an inquisition, consisting of John Vielstone, and twelve good men and true, in the year 1344. This commission found that the repair of the several piers and spans of the bridge should be carried out by the original contributary parishes; but again, the repairs were not permanent, and in 1347 great difficulty was experienced in the passing of the troops and vehicles returning from the capture of Calais, on their way from Dover to London. The old bridge was more and more neglected, until at length it became impassable, and people were obliged to cross the river in boats.

A more permanent structure of stone was commenced in the year 1387, and was probably finished within the next ten years. It was built chiefly by the public benefaction of Sir John Knolles, who (according to the ancient historian Lambarde); "By greate policie maistred the river of Medway, and of his owne charge made over it ye goodlie woorke that now standeth, and died full of yeares in ye midst of ye reigne of King Henry ye Fourth."

The mediæval stone bridge spanned the river about forty yards higher up stream than did the older wooden bridge and was 566 feet long, and 15 feet wide. On the Strood side, the approach

to the bridge was by a curved road from Watling Street, the end of the bridge on that side being where Messrs. Aveling & Porter's wharf now is. On the Rochester side, it debouched on what is now the Esplanade, close to the water-gate of the castle.

At one time, there was a strong parapet of wrought iron upon the bridge, but when it was widened (except at the two centre arches), in the early part of the 18th century, the iron balustrades were replaced by stone ones, which are now on the Esplanade at Rochester. One of these stone balustrades was presented to Dickens when the bridge was demolished, and was set up by him on the lawn behind his house at Gad's Hill, as a pedestal for a sun dial. In a letter written on June 13th, 1859, he said :—

> "One of the Balustrades of the destroyed Old Rochester Bridge has been (very nicely) presented to me by the Contractors for the works, and has been duly stone masoned and set up on the lawn behind the house. I have ordered a sun dial for the top of it, and it will be a very good object indeed."

By a statute passed in the twenty-first year of the reign of Richard the Second, the same persons who had been bound to repair the old wooden bridge, were, in like manner, bound to maintain the new structure; and about the year 1400, it was placed in the charge of a body called the Bridge-Wardens, who were thenceforth responsible for the maintenance of the bridge. It is interesting to reflect that this control has continued for an unbroken period of nearly 530 years, down to the present day.

In 1396, Sir John de Cobham erected a bridge-chapel, dedicated to Alle Sloven, or All Souls, at

the east end of the bridge. The ruins of this chapel can be seen on the Esplanade, adjoining the offices of the Bridge-Wardens, and they mark the place where the stone bridge sprang from the Rochester side of the river. Sir John de Cobham may have assisted, in some measure, in the building of the bridge also, although the majority of old documents ascribe the chief merit to Sir John Knolles. The writer of a poem on Rochester Bridge, in 1601, however, gave the chief credit to the former.

> " When first her gravell-purified river
> No bridge upon her bore-lod'n bosome bore,
> Some high renowne I strivèd for to give her,
> And made a Bridge her swiftest current o'er.
> Sir Robert Knowles was in the same an actor,
> But Cobham was the chiefest benefactor."

In 1601, I doubt not that the waters of the Medway, like those of the Thames, were pure and pellucid; and in their depths, salmon was too plentiful to please the 'prentice lads of the period; but the banks of these rivers are far from being " gravell-purified " now-a-days.

At one time, the Bridge-chapel ruins were used as part of the stables of the Crown Inn, next door; and it is probable that Dickens had this in mind when he spoke of " the strong walls now pressed into the service of humble sheds and stables," in Chapter 49 of *Great Expectations*.

After nearly five centuries of useful service, the old stone bridge was blown up and demolished by the Royal Engineers in 1857, a new cast-iron bridge having been opened to the public, with considerable pomp and civic circumstance, on the 13th of August, 1856. The new iron bridge was designed by Sir William Cubitt, and consisted of three arches, the total length being 485

feet and the width 40 feet. It was constructed on the site of the old Roman bridge, once more establishing the continuity of Watling Street.

The building of the present bridge was commenced in 1911, and finished in May, 1914. It is a steel structure, very ugly if utilitarian, and no more need be said about it, as it has no association with Dickens.

When *Great Expectations* was written, in 1860, the stone bridge had been demolished, and the iron bridge had been in use for four years, but I have not the slightest doubt that the bridge Dickens always had in his mind, whenever he wrote about Rochester, was the more picturesque stone bridge of his boyhood—the bridge Mr. Pickwick stood upon when contemplating Rochester Castle; and the bridge over which little David Copperfield limped, one Sunday evening, after getting through three and twenty miles of dusty travel on the Dover Road.

In *Great Expectations* it is mentioned once only, the occasion being the episode when Pip was pursued over the bridge by the derisive crowing of Trabb's boy and so ejected by the market town.

> "Words cannot state the amount of aggravation and injury wreaked upon me by Trabb's boy, when, passing abreast of me, he pulled up his shirt-collar, twined his side hair, stuck an arm akimbo, and smirked extravagantly by, wriggling his elbows and body and drawling to his attendants 'don't know yah, don't know yah, pon my soul don't know yah!' The disgrace attendant on his immediately afterwards taking to crowing and pursuing me across the bridge with crows, as from an exceedingly dejected fowl who had known me when I was a blacksmith, culminated the disgrace with which I left the town, and was, so to speak, ejected by it into the open country."

One of the first objects to strike the eye, on entering Rochester by way of the bridge, is the gilded weather-vane, representing H.M.S. Rodney of Trafalgar days, that surmounts a cupola on the roof of a Jacobean building, on the left hand side of the High Street. This building is the Guildhall, built in 1687; and the scene of Pip's apprenticeship to Joe Gargery.

The Council Chamber is a later addition to the original building, having been constructed only about eighty or ninety years ago. It contains a list of Rochester Mayors from 1460 to the present time, but you will not find the name of Sapsea among them.

The Justice Hall, in a corner of which Pip's indentures were signed, is on the first floor, with windows overlooking the High Street. It is reached by a fine oak staircase, with oak panelled walls, and a beautiful ceiling, attributed to Grinling Gibbons. The hall itself is also panelled in oak, and the walls behind the raised seats of the Justices are decorated with escutcheons and armorial bearings, among them the arms of Sir Cloudesley Shovel, a noted citizen in the seventeenth century.

Around the hall are hung several shiny, black portraits of various Kings and Queens, and of certain local celebrities, including Richard Watts, who founded the charity of the Six Poor Travellers, in 1579; which pictures appeared to Pip's inartistic eye to be compositions of hardbake and sticking plaster. The queer high pews, mentioned by Dickens, have long since disappeared, but otherwise, the old Justice Hall is very much as it was when Pip was pushed over to it by Pumblechook (as if he had been taken redhanded in some serious delinquency), to be bound apprentice to Joe.

The Hall is partly supported on coupled columns of the Doric order, and the paved court underneath was at one time used as a fish, fruit and vegetable market, at the back of which was a grille connected with the City Jail. The prisoners were allowed to beg from this grille, and food and drink were passed up to them upon toasting forks and other queer implements.

Consequently, the report of the Jailor to the Justices, in July, 1788, was to the effect that the liberality of the public made it impossible for him to keep the prisoners sober. One of the old wrought iron gates, and two thick oaken doors that closed the cells, can still be seen in the yard at the back of the Guildhall, but the cells themselves are now mere lumber rooms.

Nearly opposite to the Guildhall is the Bull Hotel, which was the "Blue Boar" of *Great Expectations*. The "Bull" at Rochester is one of the best-known of Dickens landmarks, so I need not say more about it than to remark upon its association with the particular book under consideration.

On the left hand side of the archway, as we enter, is the coffee room in which Pip dined on the occasion when the waiter took the liberty of placing before him an old and dirty newspaper, recording Pumblechook as the founder of his fortunes; and also, in which our hero had a tense, if not very conversational interview with Bentley Drummle. Dickens described it as being fitted with boxes, as many hotel coffee-rooms were in his time, but there have been no boxes here for many years, and some time since, the room was radically altered by being converted into a lounge.

The erstwhile "commercial room" is on the opposite side of the archway, but, in these days,

it has a new guise or purpose, having been converted into a restaurant. Above this apartment, and partly over the archway, is the room in which was held the apprenticeship dinner. Mrs. Joe, you may recollect, was so excited by the five-and-twenty guineas premium, that nothing would satisfy her but a dinner at the "Blue Boar" to celebrate the occasion, and rather late in the evening, Mr. Wopsle favoured the company with a recital of Collins's Ode to the Passions, and "threw his bloodstained sword in thunder down" to such effect, that the commercials underneath sent a waiter up to say it was not the Tumblers' Arms.

After Pip had fallen from his high estate, and had lost his great expectations, the "Blue Boar" was not so anxious for his patronage, as it had been previously, and assigned him a very indifferent chamber among the pigeons and the post-chaises up the yard. This chamber was probably one of three rooms over the stables, and coach-houses, up the yard, and behind the Assembly, or Ball-room. They could be reached by a separate staircase from the yard. Number 17 was probably Pip's usual bedroom in the Hotel, under happier circumstances, when the "Boar" was more solicitous of his patronage. Dickens himself occupied this room on two or three occasions.

Another Rochester Inn is mentioned in *Great Expectations*. When Pip went down, in response to Orlick's letter, to visit the sluice house on the marshes, he avoided the "Blue Boar" and put up at an Inn of minor reputation, down the town. This Inn is described as having once been part of an ancient ecclesiastical building, and Pip dined in a little octagonal common room, like a font.

The old City Arms Hotel, on the site of the

present Crown Hotel in Rochester, was evidently built upon an old ecclesiastical house, for it had beneath it extensive cellars with groined arches, of great antiquity. The George Hotel in the High Street, had also some connection with a former monastic building—possibly the mill belonging to the Priory, which was in George Lane close by. Below the "George," there is a fine under-croft or crypt, with groined roof, built of chalk ashlar and Caen stone. The vaulting is elaborately carved in high relief to represent oak-leaves, acorns, grapes and vine-leaves, together with monkish faces. It is likely enough that in a city like Rochester, with its former monastic activities, dominating the place for hundreds of years, there were other ecclesiastical buildings converted into taverns and guest-houses some of them to be again converted to other uses. There was, therefore, plenty of suggestion to cause Dickens to describe the Inn of minor reputation as having been once part of an ecclesiastical house, but the actual room in which Pip dined was probably at the Mitre Hotel, in High Street, Chatham, and "down the town," in relation to Rochester.

This Hotel, with the sign of the "Mitre and Clarence" (the second name being derived from the fact that King William the Fourth, when Duke of Clarence, stayed there on one occasion), stands on the site of the old Chatham Manor House, and the Court Leet continued to be held there for some time after the house had been converted into an Inn. Lord Nelson stayed here in 1805, the room he occupied being still known as the Nelson Cabin.

Adjoining the bar of the "Mitre," there was, in Dickens's time, a small, six-sided common

room, furnished with dark and heavy furniture of somewhat ecclesiastical design and appearance and with serving hatch communicating with the bar. It had one window, looking on to the High Street, and was entered by a door just inside the main hotel entrance. The commercial room was on the other side of the main hall. Dickens was very familiar with the common room at the "Mitre" for the Dickens family was intimate with that of Mr. John Tribe, the landlord of the hotel about 1820 to 1823; and the two families often met there for social evenings. The boy Charles, and his sister Fanny, were sometimes stood upon the dining table to sing sea ditties for the delectation of the company, and recalling this, many years afterwards, Dickens said he thought he must have been a horrible nuisance to many unoffending grown-up people, who were called upon to admire him.

The "Mitre" is also the Inn mentioned in the Christmas story "The Holly Tree" as the Inn at the Cathedral town where the bashful man went to school. It had an ecclesiastical sign, "The Mitre," and a bar that was "the next best thing to a Bishopric, it was so snug."

In pursuit of the Mitre at Chatham, I have travelled too far down the town, and must hark back to the "Bull" at Rochester. Within a few yards of this latter Inn, and on the same side of the street, was Edwards & Chaplin's Coach office, now a modern druggist's shop, numbered 24 High Street. I am told that the back of it communicated with the yard of the "Bull," two or three doors away, which seems to be probable. Possibly, it was at this coach office that Pip, having ordered his new clothes from Mr. Trabb, booked his seat for London by the coach leaving the

Sluice-house on the Marshes

Market Town at seven o'clock on the Saturday morning. The Nelson coach left this office every morning at half-past seven and ran to the " Spread Eagle " tavern in Gracechurch Street in the City, but Pip said he travelled to the " Cross Keys " in Wood Street, Cheapside. Coaches left that Inn twice daily for Rochester, Chatham and Brompton ; others started at eight in the morning and at seven in the evening for Dover, Deal, Margate and Canterbury, of course, passing through Rochester, but I do not know the names of those coaches.

In the *Uncommercial Traveller* Dickens described his own departure from Chatham, the town of his boyhood, by the " Blue-Eyed Maid " coach, belonging to Timson, up street. Timson was really Simpson, whose coach office in 1823 was at Chatham, but Simpson, had apparently disappeared about 1835, when the only coach offices in Chatham or Rochester were those belonging to Edwards & Chaplin. In 1823 coaches left Simpson's office for London, at six and at half-past eight in the morning, but whether one of these was the " Blue-Eyed Maid " I have not been able to discover. Robert Langton asserts that this coach was a veritable one, running between Brompton and London, and perhaps it went to the Cross Keys in Wood Street. So Pip may have travelled in the same coach in which the real boy Dickens himself was packed and forwarded, like game, to that hostelry.

There is an Inn, called the " Blue-Eyed Maid " in Southwark, and I had a notion that there might be some connection between it and the coach of the same poetical name. The " Blue-Eyed Maid " Inn is at No. 173 Borough High Street, Southwark, at the corner of Chapel Street. Chapel Street was formerly Chapel Court, so

named after a Chapel built there about the year 1799, by a Wesleyan preacher who had been an attendant at the Snow Fields Chapel near the "Angel."

Rocque's map of 1746 shews Chapel Court as Blue Maid Alley, between Mermaid Alley and the Half-moon Inn, and in Blue Maid Alley stood the "Blue Mayde" Inn, which had been in existence for many years, being shewn on a map of 1542.

The old "Blue Mayde" however, was destroyed many years since, and the present "Blue-Eyed Maid" tavern is a comparatively modern house, so it is not probable that the coach "melodiously called the "Blue-Eyed Maid" had anything to do with it.

It is many years since coaches arrived at, and departed from Edwards & Chaplin's office in Rochester High Street, and the building is now different altogether from what it was; but the back portion of it seems to have been but little altered, although the once spaceous coach-yard has been built over to meet present-day business requirements. Entrance to the yard can be obtained, by permission, through a door in the wall near the County Club, opposite to the Castle; and from the flat roof of a recent factory building the old coach office still presents a picturesque jumble of gables and tiled roofs, with the weather-vane of the Guildhall in the background peeping between the chimneys.

The original of Mr. Trabb's shop has not been identified. I have made considerable effort to trace it, but without success. Like many other ancient towns and cities, Rochester has been modernised from time to time, and the old-fashioned shops, with quaint bow windows and small flint-glass panes, are all rapidly disappearing.

The detailed description of Mr. Trabb and his shop seems to me to indicate that Dickens had some original in his mind, but he might have been drawing upon his recollections of many years before. The name of Trabb is a fictitious one, no doubt, but it is likely enough that the tailor had an original, and his shop might have been in either of the three towns, Chatham, Rochester or Strood. If in Rochester, I think it would be on the north side of the High Street, because the window of Mr. Trabb's parlour behind the shop looked out upon a prosperous garden and orchard, and only on the river side of the High Street are there gardens, some of them very pretty, even to-day, when the front premises give no indication of a garden in rear.

"Mr. Trabb had sliced his hot rolls into three feather beds, and was slipping butter in between the blankets, and covering it up. He was a prosperous old bachelor, and his open window looked into a prosperous little garden and orchard, and there was a prosperous iron safe let into the wall at the side of his fireplace, and I did not doubt that heaps of his prosperity were put away in it in bags."

VI

ROCHESTER (*Continued*)

> " Mr. Pumblechook's premises in the High Street of the market town, were of a peppercorny and farinaceous character, as the premises of a corn and seedsman should be."

OPPOSITE to Eastgate House Museum, there is a row of three old gabled houses, the ground floors of which are used as shops or business premises. The present auctioneer's office at the western end of the building, was Mr. Pumblechook's corn and seed shop. It appeared to Pip that Mr. Pumblechook " must be a very happy man indeed, to have so many little drawers in his shop " ; and the boy wondered when he " peeped into one or two on the lower tiers, and saw the tied up brown paper packets inside, whether the flower seeds and bulbs ever wanted of a fine day to break out of those jails and bloom." At the time when Dickens wrote about this shop, it was actually in the occupation of a corn and seedsman named John Bye Fairbain, and the rows of little seed drawers were ranged behind the counter, exactly as Pip saw them on the morning of his first visit to the place, the day he was taken by the worthy Pumblechook to be presented to Miss Havisham at Satis House. Mr. Fairbain and his corn business had departed before I myself became acquainted with Rochester, but I know several people in the city who remember the rows of seed-drawers perfectly well.

On the night before the occasion referred to, Pip had been brought from the village in Pumblechook's dog cart, and had been rattled off to bed in a little attic, the sloping roof of which was so low, in the corner where the bed stood, that he calculated the tiles to be within a foot of his eyebrows. This attic is a small one under the tiles, and is the only one in the house which has a sloping roof reaching down to about a foot from the floor. The room is L-shaped, forming a recess under the roof, in which the bed would naturally be placed. In point of fact, you could not put even a small bed in any other part of the room without blocking up the entrance. Light is afforded by a small casement window in the gable at the west end of the house, and by a single pane of glass inserted in the steeply sloping roof to the rear. The latter window can be seen from the passage way at the side of the house.

In this little bedroom, one can easily picture Pip's small bed in the recess, where the tiles would be literally within a foot of the occupant's eyebrows.

After passing the night in this attic, the boy breakfasted with Mr. Pumblechook in the parlour behind the shop, whilst the shopman " took his mug of tea, and hunch of bread and butter, on a sack of beans in the front premises." The parlour behind the shop is now an office, but it was here that Joe Gargery so tactfully transferred the bag of guineas—forming Pip's apprenticeship premium—to his termagant wife.

" ' What she giv,' said Joe, ' she giv ' to his friends, and by his friends, were her explanation, I mean into the hands of his sister, Mrs. J. Gargery. Them were her words, Mrs. J. Gargery. ' She mayn't have knowed,' added Joe, with an appearance of reflection, ' whether it were Joe or Jorge '."

This diplomatic speech, which Joe had evidently hammered out on the way from Satis House, had the desired effect, and produced an amiability and sweetness of temper usually foreign to Mrs. Joe's nature, no doubt increased by the cordiality of the congratulations offered to her by her uncle —Joe's uncle—but appropriated by Mrs. Joe.

> " ' It's five-and twenty pound, Mum,' echoed that basest of swindlers Pumblechook, rising to shake hands with her ; ' and it's no more than your merits (as I said when my opinion was asked), and I wish you joy of the money '."

The same parlour behind the shop was also the scene of the reading of the thrilling tragedy of George Barnwell, with appropriate action and voice, by Mr. Wopsle, who, in his impersonation of the erring apprentice, pursued his disgraceful career until half-past nine o'clock at night ; Mr. Pumblechook the while fixing his indignant stare on Pip, as though taxing him with the commission of all the crimes enumerated.

Again, the parlour was the scene of revelry when Pip, newly come into his great expectations, dined with Mr. Pumblechook on a cold collation consisting of a chicken had round from the Boar ; a tongue had round from the Boar ; and one or two other little things, including wine, also had round from the Boar, all of which probably confirmed Pip's impression, recently acquired in Mr. Trabb's shop, of the stupendous power of money.

The boy's last visit to this house took place a few days later, when he came here to don his new clothes. On this occasion, the little attic under the tiles was not considered suitable for a young man with Great Expectations, so Mr. Pumblechook's own room, decorated with clean towels for the event, was placed at his disposal. Mr.

Pumblechook himself was not at home to receive his young friend, having driven over early in the morning to another market town, which was Maidstone.

It is not possible to say exactly which was Mr. Pumblechook's own room, but I imagine it to have been the first floor front, over the shop, as being the most likely. I have read somewhere that Dickens was in the habit of constructing the interiors of buildings from their outside appearance, but as regards houses in Rochester, I think he must have been acquainted with the actual interiors, because his descriptions are almost exact, in nearly all cases. The interior of Restoration House, for instance, is as Satis House, correctly described, and another example that occurs to me is Mr. Crisparkle's house in Minor Canon Row. In his notes and plans for *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, Dickens wrote :—

> "Minor Canon Corner. The closet I remember there as a child."

And this note developed into a detailed description of Mrs. Crisparkle's wonderful spice closet and its contents, in the tenth chapter of that book.

Mr. Pumblechook's shop is a similar case. The back parlour and the little attic were obviously known to Dickens, and probably he was acquainted with the other rooms in the house also. The front room over the shop is a fairly large apartment, now used as a sitting room. The walls are panelled with oak, and the sturdy frames of the one large window (consisting of a number of narrow casements), are apparently also of oak. The wall panelling is carried over the fire place, and upon its lower border there is an inscription in faded gilt letters, which reads as follows :—

" 1684
May not this ancient room thou sit'st in
Dwell in separate living souls for joy or pain ?
Nay, all the corners may be painted plain,
Where Heaven shews pictures of some life spent well,
And may be stamped, a memory all in vain,
Upon the sight of lidless eyes in Hell."

When I first deciphered the partly obliterated characters, I thought this inscription was much older than I subsequently found it to be. The date 1684 really refers to the year in which the house was built, and not to the placing of the verse—I think a quotation from D. G. Rossetti—which was done by Mr. Kennette, sometime Town Clerk of Rochester, about the year 1880.

Originally, the three houses, of which Mr. Pumblechook's shop was one, formed a single mansion. In all these houses, the rooms on the first floor contain door-ways which formerly communicated between each house and the next. The largest room in the building is a fine oak-panelled one over the centre shop, and on both sides of this room there are blocked-up doors which originally gave access to what are now separate tenements.

It is a pity that a good deal of the old oak in these rooms has been painted, thereby detracting from its former beauty. There seems to have been, at one time, an unaccountable craze for daubing paint over really fine carved oak panels and beams in many old houses in Rochester and other parts of the county of Kent, where oak was lavishly used in construction. Luckily, a more enlightened and appreciative spirit now prevails, and people of taste are scraping off the several coats of paint and varnish that have, for years, disfigured many beautiful rooms.

Below the centre shop of the three houses,

there is a large basement with open fireplace, which was probably the kitchen of the original mansion. The association of the building with Dickens is commemorated by a bronze tablet, inscribed :—

"Mr. Sapsea's house—Edwin Drood.
Pumblechook's premises—Great Expectations."

But the plate is affixed to the wrong house, being at the east end of the row, instead of at the west end, where it should properly be. From information received (which sounds like a policeman giving evidence), the reason for this apparent blunder was as follows :—Some years since, when the City Fathers decided to affix tablets to houses and other buildings of historical and literary interest, the occupant of the house at the east end of the Pumblechookian row offered to defray the cost if the tablet were placed upon his premises ; which was accordingly done ! The real house described by Dickens is that now occupied, as to the ground floor, by a firm of Auctioneers, which is rather curious, for the same house was utilised by Dickens as the residence of Mr. Sapsea, Auctioneer and Mayor of Cloisterham.

In *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, Mr. Sapsea's house is described as having over the doorway an effigy of Mr. Sapsea's father, in the act of selling. Now, this effigy was a real figure, as real as the little wooden Midshipman in Leadenhall Street, City of London ; but it was not over the doorway of Mr. Sapsea's house in Rochester. It was actually fixed over the door of Mr. Batten's Sale-room at Rochester Banks, a short distance down the High Street, towards Chatham, where Dickens had seen it. Batten's place is now a Savings Bank, and I should very much like to

know what became of the wooden effigy, when Mr. Batten gave up business or died. F. G. Kitton made a drawing of it a good many years since, and so far as I know, that is the only record of this interesting figure faithfully described in one of Dickens's books.

Before I finish with Mr. Pumblechook's premises, I must refer to a passage in the 30th chapter of *Great Expectations*, which has always puzzled me, and which I do not think has ever been commented upon. The passage in question is this :—

> "I was thus enabled to fly from the Blue Boar immediately after breakfast. By then making a loop of about a couple of miles into the open country, at the back of Pumblechook's premises, I got round into the High Street again, a little beyond that pitfall, and felt myself in comparative security."

Now, Pip was avowedly starting from the Blue Boar to walk along the road towards London (to be picked up later by the coach in which Mr. Jaggers was to follow), but wished to avoid a chance meeting with Pumblechook. Owing to the winding of the river, and the limitations thereby imposed, the loop of two miles into the open country could only have been in the direction of Borstal, which may be said to be at the back of Pumblechook's premises. Having got round the corn merchant's shop in this manner, Pip regained the High Street, presumably on the London side. He then walked along the street, here and there recognised by tradespeople at their shop doors, before he encountered Trabb's boy, who was stricken with simulated terror at the sight of him. Two hundred yards further on, Trabb's boy emerged again round a narrow corner, and had another "seizure"; and Pip had only got as far as the Post Office (which was then

on the opposite side of the street from the present Post Office) when he again beheld Trabb's boy shooting round by a back way.

All this time, Pip was making for the bridge, across which he was pursued by the derisive crowing of his tormentor. The coach, with Mr. Jaggers inside, overtook him in due course, and Pip, having taken his seat on the box, arrived eventually in London, safe, if not sound.

It is impossible to reconcile this with the actual positions of the Blue Boar and Mr. Pumblechook's shop. The Blue Boar is not two hundred yards from the bridge, and Pumblechook's premises were in Eastgate, some distance down the High Street, and away from the bridge and the road to London, so there was no need for a walk of two miles into the open country to avoid passing the seedsman's shop. On the contrary, such a detour would be much more likely to precipitate a meeting with its proprietor.

Dickens was writing about a town with which he was intimately familiar; and about a street, every house and shop in which he probably knew quite well; so he must have had some purpose in confusing the topography in the way indicated. I can only suppose that it was with the object of introducing the episode of Pip's encounter with Trabb's boy, which could hardly be done within the short space between the Blue Boar and the bridge; but I cannot say that this explanation satisfies me altogether.

. . . . . .

Close to Mr. Pumblechook's premises in the High Street is Maidstone Road, formerly Crow Lane; and a short distance up this road, on the left hand side, stands Miss Havisham's Satis House. The real name of the mansion is Restora-

tion House, so named from the circumstance that King Charles the Second stayed here the night before the Restoration in May, 1660. The house then belonged to Sir Francis Clarke, but was in the temporary possession of Colonel Gibbons, whose regiment was stationed at Chatham.

The room occupied by the Royal guest is in the north wing, overlooking the garden in rear of the house. It is a spacious apartment, with the general effect of being unusually richly decorated in black and gold, for the lower portion of the walls is panelled in black oak, above which are dark panels forming a series of pictures of scenes of the Elizabethan period, the armour and other vestments of the figures depicted being lavishly gilded. Behind the panels situated between the richly ornamented chimney piece and the window, there is a secret passage, communicating with the roof, and also with the basement of the house, and the garden. Dickens was acquainted with the interior of the house, and the King's room, as it is called, was the room he assigned to Miss Havisham—a pretty large room, where the dressing table stood, and where wax candles burned in sconces on the walls. In this room Pip first met the eccentric old lady who was destined to have such a great influence upon his whole life. He was conducted by Estella into the house by a side door (the great front entrance being barred by chains placed across it), and taken up a dark staircase to Miss Havisham's room. There are five staircases in the house, four of them narrow, but interesting Jacobean oak staircases, nevertheless. The grand staircase is a wonderfully fine specimen of Elizabethan oak work, with beautiful carved balustrades, and is a sheer delight to look at.

The King's room is entered from a broad land-

Mr. Pumblechook's premises in the High Street

ing on the grand staircase, and across this landing is the drawing-room, a large room at the back (lighted by two or three windows overlooking the garden), in which Miss Havisham's rotting bride-cake and mildewed wedding feast were laid out upon a long table. Round and round this room, dimly lighted by candles, that unhappy lady was walked, and afterwards wheeled, by Pip, whose thoughts and whole nature were being wrought upon by the mystery and unreality of his surroundings. Later in the book, he remarks :—

> " I had stopped to look at the house as I passed, and its seared, red-bricked walls, blocked windows, and strong green ivy clasping even the stacks of chimneys with its twigs and tendons, as if with sinewy old arms, had made up a rich attractive mystery, of which I was the hero."

Something of this attractive mystery in the old house was felt by Dickens himself. Forster tells us that a favourite walk of his was to turn out of the High Street through the Vines " where some old buildings, from one of which called Restoration House, he took Satis House for *Great Expectations*, had a curious attraction for him." This attraction remained with him until the close of his life, for on June the 6th, 1870, only three days before his death, he was seen leaning upon the wooden palings dividing the Vines from Maidstone Road, and intently contemplating Restoration House. Possibly, some result of this rapt attention would have appeared in *Edwin Drood*, if the last chapter had been finished, or another chapter had been written ; but it is idle to speculate on this. The last chapter never was finished, and within three days, the master had laid aside his pen for ever.

Restoration House is a fine old Elizabethan

mansion, built in 1580 to 1600. The ground plan is in the shape of the letter " E " (Queen Elizabeth's initial), with the main entrance in the centre limb of the " E." The house is separated from the road by a paved court-yard and wrought iron gates surmounted by a crest. There is another door in the south wing, reached through a less imposing gate and smaller court-yard.

The south wing is at the present time divided from the rest of the mansion and used as a separate residence, but it was by the door of this wing that Pip was admitted by Estella, on his first visit to Miss Havisham.

The separation of the south wing has cut practically in half the old banqueting hall, on the level of the entrance hall, in which King Charles knighted his host, on the morning of his departure. Evidences of the then owner of the house are still to be seen in the rather curiously shaped ornamental ends of tie-rods on the outer walls, which, I have noticed, usually escape the observation of visitors. These tie-rod ends are shaped in the form of early English f's and c's, the initials of Sir Francis Clarke.

The front entrance consists of a porch and inner door. The porch is lighted on both sides by stained glass windows, below which are oaken benches with a row of armorial bearings painted on the back of each, as if to remind the visitor, while still on the threshold, of the historical past; and of the various families to whom the house has belonged during some three hundred and thirty years.

The gardens of the house are in the rear, and in the high wall enclosing them there is an ecclesiastical gateway which is not part of the first design. It was originally the door of an ancient little

church at Sidsing which had fallen into ruin, the various fittings having eventually come into the hands of dealers in antiques. The door was purchased and placed in the garden wall at Restoration House, by the late S. T. Aveling, somewhere about the year 1877.

The old garden occupied a tender place in Pip's heart. He says :—

> "We walked round the ruined garden twice or thrice more, and it was all in bloom for me. If the green and yellow growth of weed in the chinks of the old wall had been the most precious flowers that ever blew, it could not have been more cherished in my remembrance."

Attached to the Satis House of *Great Expectations* there was a disused brewery, in the ruined buildings of which Pip once fancied he saw the ghost of Miss Havisham hanging from a great wooden beam—a figure all in faded yellow-white, with but one shoe to the feet, and the faded trimmings of her dress looking like earthy paper. In Dickens's time, the disused brewery in the grounds of Restoration House stood partly on what is at present a kitchen garden, and partly on the ground now occupied by a modern chapel, which ground was given for the purpose, by a former owner of the house. The late S. T. Aveling used to relate a true ghost story, in connection with the disused brewery, when he lived at Restoration House in the early 'eighties. In the dead of night, he sometimes heard mysterious and blood-curdling groans and gurgles, as of some poor creature in a death agony, apparently proceeding from one of the staircases. For a long time, these ghostly sounds baffled all his efforts to discover their source, but at length he took up some of the stair treads and found a large water-

cistern beneath them. The muffled sounds he had heard were caused by the intermittent flow of water into this cistern, the house having at one time, been supplied with water from the old brewery in the grounds.

On Pip's second visit to Satis House, he was taken by Estella across a paved courtyard to a detached dwelling, that looked as if it had belonged to the manager or the head clerk of the extinct brewery. This detached dwelling-house still stands behind the high enclosing wall of Restoration House, with its gable end towards the road. It is a pretty little building, now named "Vines Cottage," with green-painted shutters to its windows; and the former paved court, mentioned by Pip, is to-day the grass lawn of an attractive little garden.

In the last chapter of *Great Expectations*, Dickens demolished the old house entirely, and made it a heap of ruin; nothing left, except a few quiet mounds, on which some of the old ivy had struck fresh root. This was no doubt necessary for the purpose of the story; but luckily it was only an imaginative vision, for the house yet remains, in its beautiful old age; in my estimation perhaps the finest specimen of several old houses that still adorn the ancient City of Rochester.

There is a real Satis House on Boley Hill, behind the Castle Keep. This was formerly the residence of Richard Watts, who founded the charity of The Six Poor Travellers, in 1579; and no doubt Dickens took the name of this house for Miss Havisham's domicile. According to tradition, Satis House was so named after Richard Watts had entertained her much travelled Majesty Queen Elizabeth. In reply to some expression of regret, on the part of her host, relative to the inadequacy

of his efforts, she replied "Satis," and the house has borne that name ever since.

Mention of the Vines, just now, reminds me that Pip passed through the Vines, or Priory garden, on his way to visit Miss Havisham for the last time.

> "The best light of the day was gone when I passed along the quiet, echoing courts behind the High Street. The nooks of ruin where the old monks had once had their refectories and gardens, and where the strong walls were now pressed into the service of humble sheds and stables, were almost as silent as the old monks in their graves. The Cathedral chimes had at once a sadder and a more remote sound to me, as I hurried on avoiding observation, than they had ever had before; so, the swell of the old organ was borne to my ears like funeral music; and the rooks, as they hovered about the grey tower and swung in the bare, high trees of the Priory garden, seemed to call to me that the place was changed, and that Estella was gone out of it for ever."

The echoing courts behind the High Street have since undergone some change from modern building between a narrow passage near to the Bull Hotel and King's Head Lane, but there is an echoing court, answering to Dickens's description, by the Deanery Gate, just outside the north door of the Cathedral.

The Priory garden lies to the east of the Cathedral, and was originally the vineyard of the Priory. In *Edwin Drood*, Dickens called it, quite correctly, "the Monks' vineyard," and strange as it may appear to us to-day, grapes were grown there, and converted into wine, by the monks of the Middle Ages. Edward the Second was regaled with such wine when he visited Prior Hamo de Hethe about the year 1326.

The Priory of Saint Andrew was founded in the year A.D. 640, and the land now called the "Vines" was presented to the Benedictine Order

by Odo, Bishop of Bayeaux, in the latter part of the eleventh century. In 1880, the Priory garden was leased from the Dean and Chapter by the City Corporation, and laid out as public gardens. There is a bronze tablet on a wall near the Archdeanery, recording this, and also the garden's association with Dickens. At the east end of the garden, opposite Restoration House, there is a clump of ancient trees known as the "Seven Sisters."

Passing through the Vines, from Restoration House, and into the Cathedral precincts, we come to Minor Canon Row, particularly associated with *Edwin Drood*; and to the Prior's Gate, one of the old gateways to the Monastery. On the left is the ancient Bishop's Palace, now divided into three or four separate houses, pleasantly situated behind long gardens; with the frowning grey walls of the Norman Castle Keep towering in the background. Close by, is Boley Hill, the "paved quaker settlement" in *Edwin Drood*.

Thus we come to the West door of the Cathedral where the fictitious John Jasper was organist and choirmaster.

When Dickens knew the Cathedral, the central tower had no steeple or roof as it has to-day, but was a square grey tower, with a slender minaret at each corner. The original Bell Tower built by Bishop Gundulph had a lead-covered pointed roof, as was common with Norman towers, and the present steeple is merely a restoration to the early design; but the present central tower is not Gundulph's structure, having been built barely a hundred years ago. Parts of Gundulph's tower can be seen close to the north door of the Cathedral.

The Church was founded in the year 604, by Ethelbert, King of Kent, and dedicated to Saint

Andrew. The first building was a very small one, only 42 feet long, and stood partly upon the detached graveyard and partly on the present road before the west front of the Cathedral. In 1080, Bishop Gundulph commenced to build a new Cathedral, the West front being reared upon the Eastern apse of the old Saxon building, the foundations of which are still *in situ*, buried under the roadway and the burial ground.

The West front and the Nave of the Cathedral are very good specimens of Norman architecture, dating from about 1130, in which year the Norman Cathedral was finished, and was dedicated by John, thirty-third Bishop of Rochester, in the presence of King Henry the First, and of eleven English and two French Bishops.

Much might be written about this ancient edifice, but it would be outside the scope of this little book. Two or three remarks may, however, be added. In the crypt, which is partly Norman and partly Early English, there are preserved in a glass case certain buff leather jerkins, bandoliers or powderflasks, muskets and bayonets, which were discovered a good many years back in a long-disused closet on the North side of the choir. These had been left behind by Cromwell's soldiery, who used the Cathedral very badly; they tore down the rails of the Communion table and removed the table itself to the Nave, in which, it is said, they even stabled their horses. Dickens was alluding to these relics, when he made Mr. Alfred Jingle remark :—

> "Old Cathedral too—earthy smell—pilgrims' feet worn away the old steps—little Saxon doors—confessionals like money-takers' boxes at theatres—queer customers those monks—buff jerkins too—matchlocks—sarcophagus—fine place—old legends too—strange stories—Capital."

F

It was in the crypt that Durdles slept and dreamed, on the night of the "Unaccountable Expedition."

Peeping in at the West door of the Cathedral, Mr. Grewgious remarked that it was like looking down the throat of Old Time; and Mr. Sapsea, when he had nothing better to do, and found "the contemplation of his own profundity becoming a little monotonous, in spite of the vastness of the subject," liked to take an airing in the Cathedral Close, with a strong sense of proprietorship upon him.

On the south wall of the south transept, is the monument to Richard Watts, with the effigy of worthy Master Richard starting out of it like a ship's figure-head, as recorded in the Christmas story *The Seven Poor Travellers*. Immediately under it there is a memorial brass which is inscribed as follows :—

"CHARLES DICKENS.

Born at Portsmouth seventh of February, 1812.
Died at Gadshill Place by Rochester, ninth of June, 1870. Buried in Westminster Abbey.
To connect his memory with the scenes in which his earliest and latest years were passed, and with the associations of Rochester Cathedral and its neighbourhood which extended over all his life, this tablet, with the sanction of the Dean and Chapter, is placed by his executors."

I think Rochester Cathedral must have a particular interest to all Dickensians, for the reason that almost the last words Dickens ever wrote were inspired by it. In the last chapter of his last and unfinished novel, and in one of the most beautiful passages he ever penned, he described Rochester and its Cathedral in words I cannot refrain from quoting.

"A brilliant morning shines on the old City. Its antiquities and ruins are surpassingly beautiful, with a lusty ivy gleaming in the sun, and the rich trees waving in the balmy air. Changes of glorious light from moving boughs, songs of birds, scents from gardens, woods, and fields—or rather from the one great garden of the whole cultivated island in its yielding time—penetrate into the Cathedral, subdue its earthy odour, and preach the Resurrection and the Life. The cold stone tombs of centuries ago grow warm; and flecks of brightness dart into the sternest marble corners of the building, fluttering there like wings."

The visitor who goes to Rochester for the first time, and views the surroundings from the platform of either Rochester or Strood Station, will very likely derive the impression that the place is flat and uninteresting. Whichever way he looks, he will see, across a swampy foreground, the winding river, dotted with brown-sailed barges tacking up or down stream; clusters of similar barges, with sails down and bare poles, lying at anchor; and numerous coal lighters and a few coastwise steamers tugging at their mooring buoys in the swiftly flowing waters. On the far side of the river, a string of dusty buildings, and the chimneys of a cement factory, with the sheds and slipways of Chatham Dockyard in the further distance, complete the general impression of mud and industrial drabness.

Mr. Micawber came here to see the Medway coal-trade, and probably viewed it from some such vantage point as I have mentioned. If he came again to-day, he would certainly see enough of the coal trade, as well as the cement, the oilcake, and other salubrious trades. Even up stream, above the bridge, the fair landscape of the Medway valley, stretching away between the wooded hills of the North Downs—and which Mr. Pickwick

admired from the bridge parapet—is marred by cement factories, with their chimney stacks rising in clusters at intervals, as you look up the broad valley towards Maidstone. An artist friend of mine sees something romantic, and the glamour of the east, in cement factories, but I confess it requires considerable effort, on my own part, to agree with him. As he paints them is another matter.

The factories, however, are all on the river level. Above them, the wooded heights of Cobham and Birling on the one hand, and those of Blue Bell Hill on the other, present a pleasing and restful background.

Towards the sea, the river valley is enclosed by the heights of Chatham and Rainham on the south side, and by Beacon Hill and the high ground of the Hoo peninsula on the north, so that Rochester is by no means situated in a flat country.

In the City itself, the atmosphere is entirely changed. Evidences of industrialism are few, and although the High Street is not now the sleepy thoroughfare it was in Dickens's day, one feels caried back to an earlier and less strenuous age. So many evidences of earlier times meet the eye on every side, that a walk through the streets of the City must inevitably conjure up visions of the remote past. For myself, I can rarely pass along the High Street without being conscious of the old Romans, and the Saxons, and the Danes and the Normans, who have successively trodden the uneven stones of Watling Street; and also of Chaucer's Canterbury pilgrims, of Mr. Pickwick, Datchery, Pip and all the rest of the fictitious people associated with the place who seem to be as real as the Princes and

Prelates who have actually passed through the city in gorgeous procession for hundreds of years past. The Castle Keep dominating the little city and the river, still bears witness to the enduring work of William de Corbeile, more than eight hundred years ago; and a few yards down Free School Lane, from the Eastgate, there can be seen still more ancient work, in the form of a Bastion and part of the city wall, built by the Romans long before the Norman Conquest, and in excellent preservation to-day, although no special precautions seem to be taken to safeguard them.

The east gate itself, that once barred entrance to the city about there, has long disappeared, but the continuation of the Roman wall, on the south side of the High Street, can still be seen by going up a narrow passage nearly opposite to the school. Here the monks tacked on to it the Priory wall, filling in and crossing the city moat, as is plainly indicated by the portion of the wall that has somewhat sunk. The Roman wall continued along the south side of the city to Boley Hill, or the Balium, and thence to the river side, passing under the drum tower of the Castle, and skirting the south-west wall of the Keep.

The Castle Keep, built in 1126, is almost intact, as to its outer shell, but it was gutted inside in the year 1738, by Walker Weldon—a descendant of Sir Anthony Weldon of Swanscombe, to whom James the First had granted the castle in 1610. Weldon tore out all the oaken doors, beams and flooring, and sold the timber to a man named Gimmett, who used it in building a brewery in Theobalds Square, off the High Street.

The Keep is 120 feet high to the top of the turrets and 104 feet to the battlements; it is 70 feet square at the base, and the walls are 12 feet

thick. Below it are the dungeons, which are lighter now than they were in mediæval times, because a hole has been cut in the outer wall and now serves as the entrance to the structure

Thus, we do not enter by the drawbridge and portcullis, as of old, but sneak in through a hole and over a wooden bridge across the lower dungeon.

Except for the Keep, there now remain only the Drum Tower, built in 1225, and parts of two or three square towers on the east side, which date from the fourteenth century. The older towers erected on the western side, by Gundulph in 1077 to 1108, together with the original water-gate and tower, and a good piece of the curtain wall, have been demolished, partly to provide material to build Upnor Castle, further down river, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

The great courtyard of the Castle is now laid out as a public garden, in which scores of pigeons strut about on the grass, or fly to and from the old grey Keep, in wheeling blue and white battalions. The Castle garden beside the sparkling river is a pleasant place on a summer afternoon, and offers little outward sign of the fierce fighting it saw when besieged by King John in 1215; by Simon de Montfort in 1264; and by Wat Tyler and his Kentish insurgents in 1381.

I have sometimes wondered if the citizens of Rochester realise what a powerful attraction and asset to the city are these relics of a by-gone age. Some little time ago there was talk of an intention to widen the High Street to meet modern traffic conditions, which work I suppose could not be done without the destruction of several picturesque houses, hundreds of years old. I am sufficiently conservative to rejoice that this pro-

ject has been dropped. The High Street is very narrow and congested, but the volume of traffic consists mostly of vehicles merely passing through the city on the way to Canterbury and the coast, and the congestion is mainly caused by the tramway cars, that never ought to have been there. It has been suggested that the High Street should be closed entirely to wheeled traffic and converted into a paved promenade for foot passengers only, something like the Pantiles at Tunbridge Wells. This is an excellent scheme, and I can well imagine what an attractive place it would be for shoppers and visitors, especially if a few trees were planted along the way.

As an additional attraction, there might be a good band, playing in the open air on summer afternoons, and I can see no reason why such a scheme should not be to the great advantage of the old city and its inhabitants. The traffic problem offers no difficulty, for vehicles could proceed, from the bridge, by way of the new Corporation Street, to Star Hill or Chatham High Street, as quickly, or more so, as by the narrow and congested High Street.

VII

ROCHESTER (*Continued*)

ROCHESTER has many Dickensian associations, other than those connected with *Great Expectations*. Indeed, I know of no town or city, except London, which the novelist utilised so much, and depicted so often in his writings. As Forster remarked, it was the birthplace of his fancy, and in the course of his work from *Pickwick* to *Edwin Drood* he turned to Rochester again and again, when seeking to provide a scene for the action of his many characters, or a setting for other purposes of his books.

Rochester was, in fact, the model for "Mudfog," for "Great Winglebury" and for "Cloisterham," as well as for the market town of *Great Expectations*, and it well deserves to be considered the centre of the real Dickensland.

The High Street itself is especially provocative of Dickens memories from the Bridge to Star Hill, where the Theatre Royal, in which Mr. Jingle was to act, has since been converted into a political club. Mr. Jingle advised Mr. Pickwick and his friends to put up at the Bull Hotel, on the ground that "Wright's, next house," was too dear,—

> "Dear, very dear—half a crown in the bill if you look at the waiter."

and possibly Dickens was here alluding to a story, current in Rochester some years ago, about the Duke of Wellington. "Wright's next house," was the Crown Hotel, by the bridge, once kept by Wright, whose name was painted up on the side of the building facing the river.

Miss Havisham's Satis House

The story goes that the Iron Duke, posting from Dover to London, once stopped at Wright's to change horses, and while this was being done, ordered a cup of coffee, for which he was charged a guinea. If this story be founded upon fact, Wright's was decidedly a dear house, but as Wright kept the "Crown" about the time that the *Pickwick Papers* were published, he probably did not appreciate the humour of Mr. Jingle's remark, and might even have considered it to be libellous.

The "Crown" was possibly the "Crozier," at which Mr. Dick Datchery put up on his first appearance in Cloisterham. The old "Crown" was demolished in 1863.

The Bull Hotel is chiefly associated with the *Pickwick Papers* and the *Seven Poor Travellers*. The Assembly Room, in which was held the Ball attended by Mr. Tracy Tupman and friend, has been considerably altered, but, not many years back, was exactly as Dickens described it, with its red benches, and hanging glass chandeliers. The elevated den, in which the musicians were "securely confined," is still just as it was in 1827.

I have already mentioned the changes that have been made in the coffee and commercial rooms.

On the opposite side of the street, there is a new Co-operative Stores, which, obviously, is of no Dickensian interest in itself, but happens to stand partly on the site of Dr. John Brown's house and surgery. Dr. Brown was the original of Joe Specks, referred to in "Dullborough Town," and for some years he had, hanging in his hall, a framed and glazed account of his meeting with Dickens. A tablet on the building records the fact of Joe Specks's residence, but the inscription reads as if Joe Specks himself were the Uncom-

mercial Traveller, and not all interested passers-by will realise that the title of a book is referred to.

A few yards further down the High Street, the queer old clock mentioned in the same book, and also in the *Seven Poor Travellers*, projects over the pavement "out of a grave red-brick building, as if time carried on business there, and hung out his sign."

The grave red brick building is the old Corn Exchange, In "Dullborough Town," Dickens calls it a Town Hall, which it was in the sense that it belonged to the Mayor and citizens, by deed of gift from Sir Cloudesley Shovel, who built it in 1706, for a clock-house and butchers' shambles. The original dial of the "moon-faced clock" had only one hand, and was much damaged in 1771, in which year it was replaced by the present dial.

Nearly opposite to this clock is the Chertsey or cemetery gate to the Cathedral precincts, better known to pilgrims from all over the world as "Jasper's Gate-house." The name first mentioned was derived from the fact that the rooms over the archway were once occupied by a certain Edmund Chertsey, who took some part in the Jack Cade Rebellion of Kentish Men in 1450; and so possibly terminated his tenancy of the gate-house.

Dickens utilised the house as the residence of John Jasper, and described the rooms pretty faithfully, including also the entrance by way of the postern stairs in a corner under the archway.

The gate-house is now a private residence.

In connection with this gate, there is a curious discrepancy in one of the illustrations by Sir Luke Fildes, for the *Mystery of Edwin Drood*, which I have pointed out elsewhere.* In this drawing, the view from the west front of the Cathedral,

* *Dickensian*, xxiii. 157.

towards the High Street, is depicted with a considerable degree of accuracy. On the left hand is the gate to the detached burial ground; and in the middle distance a portion of Saint Nicholas's Church, with an easily recognisable mural tablet, is correctly portrayed; but in place of the Chertsey Gate, separating the precincts from the High Street, Luke Fildes placed a view of the Priory Gateway, a construction mentioned a few pages back, which, in the view represented by the drawing referred to, is actually behind the spectator. Considering the accuracy of the rest of the picture, I cannot think that this was done with the object of disguising the locality, especially as the one gate is as easily recognised as the other, and I fancy Sir Luke may have made his drawing in London, from detached sketches taken at Rochester, and thus, not being very familiar with the topography of the latter city, put in the wrong gateway. On the other hand, he may have considered the Priory Gate to be the more picturesque of the two, or more suited to the surroundings of his picture. As Dickens presumably approved and passed the illustration for publication, it would seem that neither he nor his illustrator was very particular as to the topographical accuracy of the scene depicted.

While upon this subject, I may mention another illustration by the same artist, for the same book. This drawing shews Edwin and Rosa seated together on a bench, with a background of Cathedral cloisters which have been assumed to be those of Rochester Cathedral. The sketch for this illustration, however, was made at Chester, and the cloisters shewn were those of Chester Cathedral. An old friend of mine, who went to school with Luke Fildes, and retained a close friendship

with the artist throughout the life of the latter, sat with him while he made the sketch, and afterwards saw the development into the drawing we see in the book. The same friend was present when Luke Fildes transferred to the wood the celebrated picture "The Empty Chair," after Dickens had died. Indeed, this work was done chiefly in my friend's house, at Chester.

Tope's house, in which Mr. Datchery took lodgings, is next door to the Gate-house, and was originally connected with it by a door on an upper floor, whereby Mrs. Tope had access to Jasper's rooms. Tope's is now a tea-shop, and a very interesting old place, containing some beautiful linen-fold panelling. It is still "something old and out of the way; something venerable, architectural and inconvenient." The character of Tope himself was founded upon William Miles, who was verger at the Cathedral in Dickens's time.

Miles died in 1908, after being connected with the Cathedral for seventy-five years.

Leaving Tope's, and proceeding down the High Street, we see, on the north side, a quaint three-gabled little building, known as "The Six Poor Travellers," a charity founded by Richard Watts in 1579, to provide for one night, lodging and fourpence each, for six poor travellers or wayfaring men, being no common rogues nor proctors. The reason for excluding rogues is obvious, but why proctors should be coupled with rascals has given rise to some speculation. The popular version of the reason why Richard Watts fixed this lasting stigma upon a learned profession is that he had been defrauded by an unscrupulous attorney, and this is the version usually given by the Master and Matron of the house. A more

likely suggestion, that has been made, is that the proctors excluded from the benefits of the charity were certain itinerant priests, who, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, had dispensations from the Pope to absolve the subjects of the Queen from their allegiance; but I suggest the real explanation is to be found in an Act of Parliament which was passed at about the time when Richard Watts made his will and founded the charity. This measure, 39 Elizabeth, Cap 4, enacts :—

> "That all persons that be or utter themselves as Proctors, Procurators or collectors for gaols, prisons or hospitals, are, together with fencers, bearwards, common players and minstrels, to be adjudged to be rogues and vagabonds."

I believe this Act has never been repealed, so it is rather disconcerting to know that if we take any part in collecting for hospitals, we are in danger of being automatically classed with common players, and such-like undesirable persons, as rogues and vagabonds.

According to a dictionary printed in 1677, a Proctor was one who had the use and benefit of another's goods, with the permission of the owner.

The house of the Six Poor Travellers is one of the most interesting buildings in Rochester, the dormitories (three bedrooms on the ground floor, with three others above them reached by a quaint little outer gallery), being part of the original Elizabethan edifice. Each room is furnished with a massive wrought-iron bedstead, of blacksmith's make, and has a chimney, as provided for in Richard Watts's will, but no fireplace. Below the main building, there is a large cellar, now divided into two, and here there is still a heavy oaken door, with strong hinges and fastenings, and a small, shuttered opening through which

food was aforetime passed to refractory apprentice lads who were sometimes confined there.

In 1854 when Dickens visited the house, and described his Christmas Eve entertainment of the poor travellers, the recipients of the charity sat in what is now the private sitting room of the Master and Matron, in the front of the house. Nowadays the travellers are entertained in a small dining room built out in the yard at the back, and facing the dormitories. Quite recently, a bathroom has been added for the further comfort of the nightly guests, who are still received, exactly as they have been for the last three hundred and fifty years.

The records shew that rather more than one thousand poor travellers are entertained yearly. There are not always six applicants, although provision is made every night for the full complement, but sometimes there are considerably more, especially in the summer time, when more men are on tramp than during the cold season. The candidates assemble on the esplanade, near the Castle, and are there interrogated by the master, who chooses the successful six.

The name, occupation, and place from which the traveller has journeyed to Rochester are recorded each night in a book, which provides interesting reading. The greater proportion of the men are of the labouring class, but some well educated men, including a doctor, a missionary and two or three artists, have been among those relieved. A few of the last-named profession have left behind very creditable sketches and drawings, as tokens of gratitude, and one wonders how it came about that they were reduced to seeking a charitable bed and supper.

The income from the property bequeathed by

Richard Watts has so much increased that the Trustees are able to defray the cost of the following, in addition to the original charity :—

Eight male and eight female inmates of the almhouses in Maidstone Road ; each receiving £30 per annum.

Sixteen out-pensioners, each receiving a weekly allowance of ten shillings.

A yearly contribution of £1,200 to St. Bartholomew's Hospital, Rochester.

The maintenance of Watts's public baths.

£150 annually for apprenticeship premiums.

£150 annually for scholarship fees at the Mathematical School.

£150 annually for scholarships at the Girls' Grammar School.

The maintenance of two trained nurses and six occasional nurses, to attend the poor people of Rochester.

The six poor travellers who may be received every night at about six o'clock, are each provided with a supper consisting of half a pound of boiled beef, one pound of bread and a pint of hot coffee. The menu is never varied, but as any one traveller is only regaled on one night, there is no monotony so far as he is concerned. The men receive their fourpences when they depart in the morning and proceed on their travels, mostly in search of work.

The travellers do not, however, appear to have always been provided with supper, for an original ticket of admission, now in my possession, makes no mention of such. A photograph of this ticket is given on another page. This ticket was issued to an applicant a few months before Dickens wrote his Christmas Story *The Seven Poor Travellers*, himself being the seventh. In 1773, one admission ticket took the form of a recom-

mendation from the Mayor or some other person in authority. One such ticket reads as follows :

> 9th Day of April, 1773.
> MR. PROVIDER,
> Please to relieve these two poor travellers with fourpence each,
> (Signed) JAS. HULKES.
> 8d.
> 113

I am glad to record that the Rochester Branch of the Dickens Fellowship continues the ministration begun by Dickens in 1854, and every Christmas Eve provides tobacco and some seasonable fare in augmentation of the Poor Travellers' supper.

A little further down Eastgate and on the same side of the street, stands Eastgate House, the "Nuns' House" and Miss Twinkleton's Academy of *Edwin Drood*. It was also very possibly the Westgate House, Miss Tomkins's Establishment for young ladies, mentioned in the *Pickwick Papers*, although Dickens placed this at Bury St. Edmunds. The old wall surrounding the garden was about seven feet high and as Hughes remarks in his *Week's Tramp in Dickensland*, "a drop from it into the garden would be uncommonly suggestive of the scene which took place between Sam Weller and his master on the occasion of the supposed elopement of one of the young ladies of Miss Tompkins's establishment. . . . The very tree which Mr. Pickwick considered a very dangerous neighbour in a thunder storm, is still there—a pretty Acacia."

Eastgate House was built by Sir Peter Bucke in 1591, and is a very fine specimen of Elizabethan building, almost unaltered. Some of the rooms have moulded ceilings bearing the Arms of the

founder; and the majority have open fire places and elaborate chimney pieces. One or two of the latter, however, are importations from other historic houses in Rochester.

The building is used as a local museum, one room on the ground floor being devoted to Dickens exhibits. In this room is a brass name-plate which announced, at one time, that the house was used as a ladies' school.

Before passing on, I shall venture to make the suggestion that when describing the house of Mr. Wickfield in Canterbury, Dickens had in mind—at any rate to some extent—Eastgate House in Rochester. Mr. Wickfield's house is usually stated to be the old three-gabled building at No. 71 Saint Dunstan's Street, Canterbury, which accordingly bears upon its door the title "The House of Agnes." The tenement, however, does not entirely agree with Dickens's description, particularly with regard to a "little round tower that formed one side of the building," in a circular room of which tower Uriah Heep pursued his nefarious operations. There is no such construction at "The House of Agnes" but one of the distinctive features of Eastgate House in Rochester is the little circular tower at the south-east corner.

In other respects, "The House of Agnes" conforms to the written description, and I have no wish to attempt to deprive Canterbury of one of its accepted Dickens landmarks. Alfred Rimmer asserted in 1888 that the real original of Mr. Wickfield's house had been pulled down to make room for a new bank, but he does not appear to have seen the original himself. Dickens said there were several old houses in Canterbury "that might do," and perhaps the "House of Agnes" is one of them.

Opposite to Eastgate House, Rochester, is Maidstone Road, formerly Crow Lane. A few yards up this road, from Eastgate, we see a furniture store, with the entrance gate to a yard. This building stands on the site of the " White Duck " Inn, afterwards known as Kit's Lodging House, or the " Travellers' Twopenny." As a matter of fact, it was known by the citizens of Rochester as the " Travellers' Threepenny " and Dickens wrote it so in his manuscript of *Edwin Drood*, though he afterwards altered the second word to " Two-penny."

The " White Duck " was a rather disreputable little public-house, and perhaps more disreputable as Kit's Lodging House. It was a mean little brick building, with only one shuttered window facing the road, on the ground floor, and the announcement " Lodgings " over the doorway. Behind this inn, there used to be a yard in which was a stone built cottage of considerable age. I have always associated these with the yard and cottage of Stoney Durdles, who had a gift for detecting the presence of buried " old 'uns " by tapping the Cathedral walls with his hammer. Immediately opposite to this yard and across the lane, is the old City Wall ; and Durdles's cottage was supposed to have been built with material stolen from the City Wall. I think it very likely that Dickens had this place in mind when describing Durdles's house and yard, but he seems to have moved these to a spot nearer to the Cathedral, for, in the original manuscript of *Edwin Drood*, he described Durdles's yard as overlooking the churchyard, although the words do not appear in the printed book. The spot to which he transferred the yard and cottage was possibly next the old Deanery, now a book shop, in the

High Street, as suggested by Mr. Carden. There actually was a small builder's yard there, at one time, but I do not think it agreed with the description of Durdles's place.

On the night of the "Unaccountable Expedition," Durdles and Jasper went through the Monks' vineyard to Minor Canon Corner, and to the little door opposite by which they entered the Cathedral crypt. We have already traversed this route on our way from Restoration House to the Cathedral, but I did not then refer particularly to Minor Canon Row. The houses here are exactly as Dickens described them :—

> "Red-brick walls harmoniously toned down in colour by time, strong-rooted ivy, latticed windows, panelled rooms, big oaken beams in little places, and stone-walled gardens where the annual fruit yet ripened upon monkish trees, were the principal surroundings of pretty-old Mrs. Crisparkle and the Reverend Septimus as they sat at breakfast."

Mr. Crisparkle's house was the second one from the East end of the row.

In the *Seven Poor Travellers*, Dickens described the houses as being :—

> "A wonderfully quaint row of red-brick tenements, which the clarionet obligingly informed me were inhabited by the Minor Canons. They had odd little porches over the doors, like sounding boards over old pulpits; and I thought I should like to see one of the Minor Canons come out upon his top step, and favour us with a little Christmas discourse about the poor scholars of Rochester; taking for his text the words of his Master relative to the devouring of widows' houses."

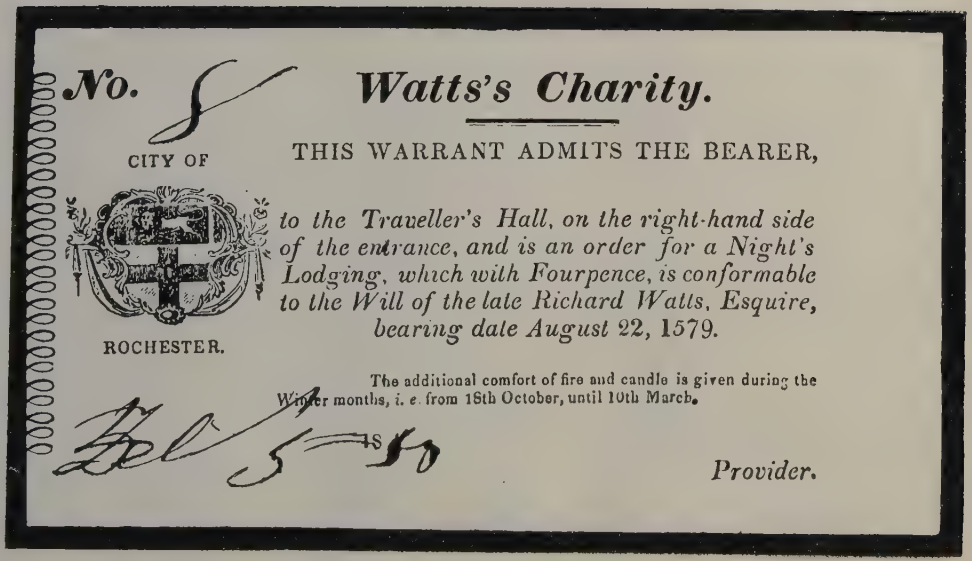
The latter part of this passage is a reference to a case that excited a good deal of comment in Rochester, about the year 1850, four years before the publication of the Christmas story mentioned.

In 1849, the Rev. Robert Whiston was headmaster of the Cathedral school, and he charged the Dean and Chapter with diverting to other church uses certain funds, left in Trust in the year 1542, for the education and maintenance of four university students and twenty foundation grammar boys. Whiston was dismissed from his post as headmaster of the school, but brought an action against the Cathedral authorities to compel them to refund the money, and apply it to the purpose intended by the Trust Deeds. The case is fully set out in a rather scarce book entitled " Cathedral Trusts and Their Fulfilment," published in 1850. No doubt, Dickens had either read this book, or had heard the current gossip about the case, in Rochester, when he wrote the *Seven Poor Travellers*.

The houses of Minor Canon Row were built, as to six of them, in the years 1721 to 1723, " for the petty canons." The seventh house was added to the row in 1735. The buildings stand on the site of a former row consisting of " eighteen several low rooms, and five upper ones, inhabited by divers old and decrepit poor people belonging to the Cathedral Church." These older houses were demolished in 1698, but what became of the divers old and decrepit poor people I know not.

The site of the small cemetery opposite to the west front of the Cathedral and under the castle walls, was at one time part of the moat, and the grave yard itself is a portion of the burial ground attached to the Church of Saint Nicholas, within the precincts. It was here that Dickens desired to be buried, but, as we know, his wish was overruled by the will of the nation that his remains should lie in Westminster Abbey.

Retracing our steps, and passing eastwards towards Chatham, we come to Fort Pitt, on the


No. 8
Watts's Charity.
CITY OF
THIS WARRANT ADMITS THE BEARER,
to the Traveller's Hall, on the right-hand side of the entrance, and is an order for a Night's Lodging, which with Fourpence, is conformable to the Will of the late Richard Watts, Esquire, bearing date August 22, 1579.
ROCHESTER.
The additional comfort of fire and candle is given during the Winter months, i. e. from 18th October, until 10th March.
Provider.

Admission Ticket. The Six Poor Travellers

New Road, between Star Hill and Chatham railway station. Behind Fort Pitt were the meadows in which was arranged to be fought the duel between Mr. Winkle and Dr. Slammer of the 97th; but, luckily for the former, the meeting ended quite amicably. Fort Pitt was one of the chain of fortifications erected to defend Chatham on the land side, at the beginning of the 19th century. It is now a military hospital.

A short distance beyond Fort Pitt is Ordnance Place, where the Dickens family lived when Charles was a boy. At No. 11 (formerly No.2) a tablet on the front of the house records that Dickens lived there from 1817 to 1821. Years afterwards, the former neighbours in Ordnance Place appeared under fictitious names in the *Sketches by Boz*. The old lady in "Our Parish" was a Mrs. Newnham, who lived at No. 5; and the Half-pay Captain was drawn from a real personage who was also a near neighbour. Young Charles had a chum named George Stroughill, who lived next door, and is supposed to be the original of Steerforth, in *David Copperfield*; whilst Stroughill's sister Lucy figured in the *Holiday Romance* and in the *Wreck of the Golden Mary*.

From Ordnance Place, the Dickens family moved to a less desirable neighbourhood, in the Brook. This is a street running eastwards from Military Road; and in a small house at No. 18 St. Mary's Place, Dickens lived from 1821 until he left Chatham, as he thought for ever, in 1823. The house in the Brook is also marked by a tablet and is now (or was very recently), a lodging house. Next door to it is a factory, which, when Dickens lived in the Brook, was the Providence Chapel, in the charge of a Baptist minister named William Giles, whose son—also William Giles—was

Dickens's first schoolmaster, in Clover Lane, Chatham.

Snorridge Bottom, mentioned in *The Perils of Certain English Prisoners*, is about two miles to the south of Chatham. It is a long valley between two ridges of high ground, on the east side of the Chatham–Maidstone Road, and "betwixt Chatham and Maidstone," as Dickens described it to be. The valley is mainly grazing land for sheep and cattle, but there are a few orchards dotted here and there. The real name of the Bottom is "Snolledge" but it is locally known as both "Snolledge" and "Snorridge." It may be reached by following the Maidstone road from Chatham as far as Huntsman's Corner. Turning to the left at this point, we follow the road that very soon dips steeply down to Snodhurst Farm, which is in Snorridge Bottom.

The Inn which Dickens called the "Tilted Wagon," in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* is further south, at the top of Blue Bell Hill, some six miles from Rochester. The original of this tavern at which Neville Landless breakfasted on the morning of his intended walking tour, was the old "Upper Bell" Inn, a wayside hostelry on a narrow road that forked to the left from the main Maidstone road, about half a mile from the hill top and after running for about a mile and a half nearly parallel to the turnpike road, rejoined it on the further slope of the steep Downs. The portion of this by-road north of the old tavern was obliterated about fifty years ago. It was fenced off, for some reason, and the track has now disappeared, being quite overgrown by the encroachment of the thicket or wood through which it formerly ran.

Following the Maidstone road from Rochester

or Chatham, as far as the present modern " Upper Bell " Inn, we turn to the left up a narrow lane and a walk or drive of half a mile brings us to the ancient road and a couple of brick cottages under one roof, which, in Dickens's time were the " Upper Bell " tavern, or the "Tilted Wagon." The outer shell remains as it was, but the interior was converted into cottages about the time when the road to the north of it was cut off, and ceased to be a thoroughfare towards Rochester.

The local people will tell you that the lane was part of the ancient Pilgrims' Way, and that the Maidstone coaches used to run that way, but I think this is very doubtful. The Pilgrims' Way is lower down the southern slope of the Downs ; and the turnpike road, half a mile to the west of the old " Upper Bell," is more likely to have been the coach road.

VIII

THE DOVER ROAD

> " The journey from our town to the metropolis, was a journey of about five hours. It was a little past mid-day when the four-horse stage-coach by which I was a passenger, got into the ravel of traffic frayed out about the Cross Keys, Wood Street, Cheapside, London."

THE journey of about five hours, by stage-coach, was along the old Dover Road, and Pip made this journey several times afterwards, when he went down to the market town to visit Miss Havisham at Satis House.

In these days, the Dover Road is much changed from what it was when Pip travelled over it, and the construction of arterial motor roads has caused the old highway to be much less used by hrough traffic than was the case in its famous coaching days. From Rochester, the coaches passed over the bridge into Strood and to the turnpike gate ; and then up Strood Hill, which was steeper than now, the cutting near the top, called " Davis's straits," not having been made at that time.

At the foot of Strood Hill, and a few yards beyond the site of the turnpike gate, stands a quaint little wooden tavern with the sign of the " Crispin and Crispanus." This inn was well-known to Dickens, who mentioned it in the *Uncommercial Traveller* in connection with the Clock-mending Tramp. The stable clock which the tramp is represented to have repaired at the " Hall " was that at Cobham Hall, the seat of the Earl of Darnley, about four miles from Rochester.

The "Crispin and Crispanus" takes its name from the Patron Saints of shoemakers or cobblers, two brothers belonging to a noble family of ancient Rome, who, embracing Christianity, fled to Gaul, where they supported themselves by making shoes until they were martyred at Soissons in A.D. 287.

The inn sign, projecting from the upper storey of the wooden house, depicted, until recently, the two brothers standing side by side in a large tub. The significance of that picture must have been a mystery to many passers-by who saw it and speculated upon it; and the people of the inn could offer no explanation. It represented the brothers being put to death for their faith, by immersion in a pot of boiling oil.

The sign has now been repainted, and depicts, on the one side, the brothers working at their trade of shoemaking in an open wooden building; and on the other side, the two Saints wandering on their way when preaching, one of the figures holding a palm branch, and the other carrying a hammer.

I have good reason to believe that the old oil-tub picture is to be restored to the sign.

At the top of Strood Hill there is a junction, formed by the new arterial road to London and the Gravesend road running by Gad's Hill. The former road follows roughly the line of the Roman Watling Street, until a few years ago a narrow by-lane, about ten feet wide, running through Cobham woods to Swanscombe (Swain's Camp), where its continuity was broken, except for a foo path through the woods; but, after a détour by narrow lanes via Betsham, again traced some little distance to the south of Greenhithe, whence it could be followed to Dartford.

The coach road from the top of Strood Hill followed the line of the present arterial road to Gravesend, but its character is now entirely changed, for the high banks, hedges, and trees that once lined it on both sides for a large part of the way, have all disappeared; cut down when the old dusty, chalky road was broadened to about three times its former width, in which process the bends and turns were straightened out, and most of the dips and hollows filled in to reduce the gradients.

Two-and-a-half miles from Rochester, the road ascends Gad's Hill, and here a bit of the old coach road remains in a hollow on the north side of the road, which has been made less steep. At the top of Gad's Hill is the "Sir John Falstaff" Inn, the "little ale-house over the way," at one time kept by Edwin Trood; and opposite to this is Gad's Hill Place, the house in which Dickens lived during the last ten years of his life.

The house is so well known to Dickensians that I need say very little about it, except that it is now a girls' school, and that the study in which Dickens worked (when not in the Swiss Chalet that stood between two large cedar trees, in the wilderness on the other side of the road), and the dining room in which he had his fatal seizure on June 8th, 1870, are kept as nearly as possible as they were when the novelist occupied them. His rose garden, and the wonderful and expensive well he had sunk near the stables, are also practically as he left them. Other eloquent evidences of Dickens are the gravestone of Dick the canary, and the hole cut in the wall to enable the dogs to retire into the shade of the shrubbery when the sun was too hot upon the open stable yard.

In the hall of the house there still hangs the

framed and glazed greeting, illuminated by Owen Jones, the placing of which, Forster says, was Dickens's first act of ownership.

> "This house, Gadshill Place, stands on the summit of Shakespeare's Gad's Hill, ever memorable for its association with Sir John Falstaff in his noble fancy. 'But my lads, my lads, to-morrow morning by four o'clock, early at Gadshill! there are pilgrims going to Canterbury with rich offerings, and traders riding to London with fat purses; I have vizards for you all; you have horses for youselves'."

The counterfeit book-backs in glass cases, on the inside of the study door and on the wall between the door and the window, are still as Dickens left them. I give their titles in alphabetical order, to facilitate reference, but it is not the order in which they appear on the shelves. The letter (T) denoted that the titles so marked were also used for a similar purpose at Tavistock House, London, where Dickens resided before moving to Gad's Hill in 1860.

TITLES OF DUMMY BOOKS ON THE STUDY DOOR.

T. Burke (of Edinburgh) on the Sublime and Beautiful. 2 Vols.
T. Captain Cook's Life of Savage. 2 Vols.
Cat's Lives. 9 Vols.
Cockatoo on Perch.
T. Commonplace Book of the Oldest Inhabitant. 2 Vols.
T. Five minutes in China. 3 Vols.
T. Green's Overland Mail.
Had Shakespeare's Uncle a Singing Face? 5 Vols.
T. Hansard's Guide to Refreshing Sleep. 19 Vols.
T. History of the Middling Ages. 6 Vols.
History of a Short Chancery Suit. 21 Vols.
T. Paxton's Bloomers. 5 Vols.
Phrenology. Italian Organ.
Shelley's Oysters.
Swallows on Emigration. 2 Vols.

T. Teazer's Commentaries.
T. The Book of Moses and Sons. 2 Vols.
The Pleasures of Boredom. A Poem.
T. The Quarrelly Review. 4 Vols.
The Scotch Fiddle. Burns.
The Wisdom of our Ancestors.
Vol. I. Ignorance.
Vol. II. Superstition.
Vol. III. The Block.
Vol. IV. The Stake.
Vol. V. The Rack.
Vol. VI. Dirt.
Vol. VII. Disease.
Was Shakespeare's Father Merry ? 6 Vols.
Waterworks. By Father Mathew.
Woods and Forests. By Peter the Wild Boy.

The following are on the strip of wall between the study door and the window :—

T. Abernethy on the Constitution. 2 Vols.
T. A Carpenter's Bench of Bishops. 2 Vols.
Acoustics. Cod's Sounds.
Adam's Precedents.
T. Bowwowdom.
Butcher's Suetonius.
T. Captain Parry's Virtues of Cold Tar.
Catalogue of Statues to the Duke of Wellington. 10 Vols.
Chickweed.
Critt's Edition of Meller. 2 Vols.
T. Downeaster's Complete Calculator.
Drouet's Farming. 5 Vols.
T. Drowsy's Recollections of Nothing.
T. Forty Winks at the Pyramids. 2 Vols.
General Tom Thumb's Modern Warfare. 2 Vols.
T. Growler's Gruffology. With Appendix. 4 Vols.
Groundsel. By the Author of Chickweed.
Haydn's Commentaries.
T. Heavyside's Conversations with Nobody. 3 Vols.
Hoyle on the Turnip.
Hudson's Complete Failure.
T. Jonah's Account of the Whale.
T. Kant's Eminent Humbugs. 10 Vols.
T. King Henry the Eighth's Evidences of Christianity. 5 Vols.
T. Lady Godiva on the Horse.

Life and Letters of the Learned Pig.
Mag's Diversions. 4 Vols.
T. Malthus's Nursery Songs. 2 Vols.
T. Miss Biffin on Deportment.
T. Morrison's Pills Progress. 2 Vols.
T. Munchausen's Modern Miracles. 4 Vols.
Noah's Arkitecture. 2 Vols.
T. On the Use of Mercury by the Ancient Poets.
Optics. Hooks and Eyes.
T. Orson's Art of Etiquette.
T. Richardson's Show of Dramatic Literature. 12 Vols.
Socrates on Wedlock.
T. Steele. By the Author of "Ion."
Strutt's Walk.
T. The Art of Cutting Teeth.
The Cook's Oracle.
The Delphin Oracle.
T. The Gunpowder Magazine. 4 Vols.
The Locomotive Engine Explained by Colonel Sibthorpe.
T. Toot's Universal Letter-Writer. 2 Vols.
Treatise on the Tapeworm. By Tim Bobbin.
Was Shakespeare's Mother Fair? 4 Vols.

The idea of using the dummy backs to cover the study door and thus continue the line of bookshelves right round the room, was probably derived from a similar arrangement at the Athenæum Club, of which Dickens became a member in 1838.

As befits a Club like the Athenæum, the titles of the counterfeit books on the two doors there are all of a classical nature. Dickens, on the other hand, invented humorous titles, but, as the subjects of some of them were topical and peculiar to his own period, their ingenuity is not now so apparent, and we require to know the references in order to appreciate the humour of such titles as "Critt's Edition of Meller"; "Green's Overland Mail," "Hoyle on the Turnip"; and "The Delphin Oracle. "Drouet's Farming," appears

to refer to one Drouet of Tooting, a notorious baby-farmer of 1849.

A short distance from Gad's Hill Place, the third milestone from Rochester, and twenty-sixth from London, stands on the north side of the road. Dickens referred to this milestone in the chapter on Tramps, in the *Uncommercial Traveller*.

> "I have my eye upon a piece of Kentish road, bordered on either side by a wood, and having on one hand, between the road dust and the trees, a skirting patch of grass. Wild flowers grow in abundance on this spot, and it lies high and airy, with a distant river stealing steadily away to the ocean, like a man's life. To gain the milestone here, which the moss, primroses, violets, bluebells and wild roses would soon render illegible but for peering travellers pushing them aside with their sticks, you must come up a steep hill, come which way you may."

To-day, the milestone is bare of wild flowers, and stands close to a wooden paling, on a great wide motoring road. Gone are the woods, and the violets and wild roses, their places being occupied by little bungalows and gardens; but twenty years ago, the Dover Road at the top of Gad's Hill was a dusty highway bordered on both sides by thick woods, and with a skirting patch of grass on the south side, exactly as Dickens described it at about the time when he wrote *Great Expectations*.

"Within appropriate distance" of this milestone there was a "little hostelry which no man possessed of a penny was ever known to pass in warm weather." Before its entrance were "certain pleasant trimmed limes; likewise a cool well," with a musical bucket-handle. This little hostelry is the "Duke of York" inn, or Old Beefsteak House, at the bottom of Gad's Hill, on its west side. The inn has been re-built, or at

least re-fronted since Dickens knew it, but the pleasant trimmed limes, and the cool well, with its wooden cover like a miniature lych gate, are still in the open space in front of the house.

It was in the little sanded bar at this rustic ale-house that I first ran Farmer Smith to earth. He is an old man now, but still hale and hearty, and an interesting personality, because, in his young days, he was garden boy at Gad's Hill Place for two or three years before Dickens died, and is thus a living link with the master.

The manner of his entry into Dickens's service, as told to me by himself, was to the following effect :—

Mr. Dickens had allowed the neighbouring widow of a small farmer to graze her two or three cows in the meadow behind Gad's Hill Place on the condition that the animals were not to be allowed to stray into the garden ; so young Smith was employed by the widow to tend the cattle, at the magnificent wage of fourpence per diem. One afternoon Dickens caught the boy swinging on a branch of one of his trees, and taking him by the ear, gave him a lecture on the danger he ran of falling and breaking his neck ; or the possibility of the branch breaking and so spoiling the tree. He then took the lad into the house, instructed the cook to give him something to eat and sent for a carpenter, who was ordered to build a proper swing in the meadow. When the apparatus was completed, Dickens pointed out to the boy that he could now swing without damage either to himself or to the trees. Shortly afterwards, he took him into his service as garden boy.

This story was voluntarily confirmed by a little, bent, old man, having a shock of dusty hair, who sat upon a wooden bench in a corner. He also

proffered the information that he had many a time had his own ears " clipped " by Mr. Dickens, when stealing apples at Gad's Hill Place. So here were two old men, both of whom had known Dickens in the flesh. I am acquainted with three other persons (residing in Rochester) and two others living at Higham who have seen or met Dickens, but the number of living people who actually remember the author must now be very few.

Farmer Smith preserves some interesting recollections of the family and servants at Gad's Hill, including certain sartorial details. He told me that Mr. Dickens sometimes wore shepherd's plaid trousers and velvet waistcoats. He remembers " Miss Mamie, Miss Kate and the Boys " ; also Miss Hogarth ; but he never saw Mrs. Dickens.

A mile beyond the " Duke of York," stage-coaches lumbered up a steep hill, at the top of which is Chalk Church (with its carved figure of a jovial monk over the west door), standing in an isolated position on high ground overlooking the distant marshes. Nearly a mile further on, the stage ran through Chalk village, by the little wooden cottage in which Dickens spent his honeymoon ; and through a turnpike gate a little beyond the forge.

The new road skirts Chalk village on the south side ; consequently, the old road through the village itself has not been altered since Dickens knew it, and I doubt if more than two or three cottages have been built there since his time.

Many of the old houses are wooden structures and remain exactly as they were. The " White Hart " Inn, with its sign post on the opposite side of the road, is unchanged, but the " Lord Nelson" nearly opposite to the honeymoon cottage, has ceased to be a tavern, and is now converted into tenements.

Between Chalk village and its church, there are two little bits of the old coach-road still to be seen—short lengths of macadamised surfaces on the bank at the south side, left when the new road was cut ruthlessly through a bend.

Just beyond the forge at Chalk, the main road to Gravesend forks to the right. The real Dover Road is the much narrower one, on the left, that leads to the south of Gravesend, and this bit of road was practically untouched until the present year. Nearly up to the time at which I am writing,* there was a particularly pretty corner where the road was overhung by the trees of a dense thicket on each side, typical of the character of the old coach road for many miles of its length, but during the last two or three weeks these old trees have been felled, and the high banks are being cut away with the object of widening the thoroughfare. I think I am progressive enough in some directions, but the destruction of fine old trees that can never be replaced in our time, and the spoliation of nature's beauty spots, for whatever reason, always fills me with sadness and resentment.

Dickens never utilised Gravesend in any of his books, as the scene of an important episode, although the town is mentioned or casually referred to in several. I am told by old inhabitants that Dickens did not like Gravesend or its townspeople, and, so far as I can make out, the dislike was not all on his side, but I do not know the reason. Perhaps the local people having regarded Dickens as a new-comer to the district, were, from innate conservatism, slow to accept him. Among his comparatively near neighbours was one family which is said to have viewed him with particular dislike. This family was charac-

* March, 1929.

terised by the peculiarity that the eyes of all its members were of an uncommon colour, a very pale blue, which fact, of course, was well known in the district. It is possible that one cause of their objection to Dickens was that they resented his description of Joe Gargery, whose eyes were of " such a very undecided blue that they seemed to have somehow got mixed with their own whites," but this is merely conjecture. There seems to be no doubt, however, that there was some mutual dislike or distrust between the master of Gad's Hill Place and the townspeople of Gravesend, and that it originated in the early years of Dickens's temporary residence at Chalk. When he lived at Gad's Hill, I cannot find that he was on very familiar terms with the neighbouring gentry, but he was decidedly popular with the poorer people, who looked upon him as the beneficent squire of the village.

There is good reason to think that the somewhat derisive description of " Muggleton " in the *Pickwick Papers* was founded upon Gravesend as it was in 1836. At that time, the general aspect of the town would have very well answered to the description of Muggleton, and the bat and ball cricket ground, about half a mile from the market place, was an institution long before *Pickwick* was written. Cricket week is still one of the most important holiday events, the streets being always dressed with flags for the occasion. Gravesend has been a Corporate Town for hundreds of years, and is the only town in Kent known as the " Loyal and Ancient Borough." Nevertheless, Gravesend is not Muggleton, because its position on the map is not in accordance with the locality of Dingley Dell, and I am inclined to the view that Dickens meant Malling, although I feel sure he

The Half-way House

founded the description of his fictitious town upon Gravesend.

In Dickens's day, the riverside town was a popular holiday resort, and strange as it may now appear, there were rows of bathing machines along the river front. In *Bleak House*, reference is made to the recreative character of the place when the clerks pined for bliss with their beloved objects at Margate, Ramsgate or Gravesend, during the hottest long vacation. Again, in the *Sketches by Boz*, we find that the Tuggs family considered Gravesend to be *low*.

Mr. Peggotty and Ham came to Gravesend in one of their Yarmouth lugs ; and years afterwards sailed from the same place for Australia, in company with Mr. Micawber and family. Gravesend was the port of embarkation from which both Julia Mills and Mr. Jack Malden sailed for India ; and where Walter Gay and Florence Dombey boarded an outward bound ship, after their marriage. In *Great Expectations*, the town is mentioned in connection with the river journey in the attempt, which I shall refer to presently, to get Magwitch out of the country.

Dickens stayed at Gravesend on various occasions, and always put up at Waite's Hotel, later known as the Commercial Hotel, on the Gordon Promenade. It has now been demolished to make room for an extension of the Sea School. Not far from it is the canal basin, and the entrance to the Gravesend–Higham canal, on the bank of which stands a very old cottage consisting of an inverted boat, which I have elsewhere suggested may have given Dickens the idea of Mr. Peggotty's home on Yarmouth sands.*

I have already mentioned that the Dover Road

* *The Dickensian*. Vol. XXV, p. 124.

did not lead through Gravesend, but passed it about half-a-mile to the south. After leading by the old " Prince of Orange " (once a coaching inn but now merely a public house), it continues through part of Northfleet to the " Leather Bottel " in that town, where it rejoins the New Road from Gravesend and Rosherville. Thence its course is drab and uninteresting, by way of Paper Mills and Cement Factories, to Greenhithe (where there is a little inn of Dickens interest which I shall refer to later), and on to Dartford.

Dartford is not particularly mentioned in any of Dickens's books, except that Mr. Dorrit was waylaid there, prior to being pillaged at Gravesend, rifled at Rochester, fleeced at Sittingbourne, and sacked at Canterbury ; on his impressive progress to Dover and the Continent. The Bull Hotel at Dartford still retains its character as an old-time coaching inn, and probably the Commodore coach for Rochester stopped there to change horses and give Mr. Pickwick and his friends an opportunity to get down and stretch their legs on the Wackford Squeers principle. Otherwise, Dartford's association with Dickens is almost confined to a visit with Mark Lemon in 1854, on which occasion Dickens and his friend witnessed a performance of " The Stranger," by a strolling theatrical company in Mr. Munn's schoolroom (converted for the nonce into an extemporised theatre), and after the performance sent, by the landlord of the hotel, an ample supply of ingredients for a jorum of hot punch, with their compliments to the performers. From Dartford, we follow the Dover Road up West Hill and through Crayford to Bexley Heath, a long straggling town where once was wild heath land, infested with highwaymen and footpads, the terror of passengers travelling in the

stage-coaches, or in the heavy cumbersome carriages used by people of quality.

At the western extremity of Bexley Heath is Welling, where the "Guy Earl of Warwick" inn stood until two or three years ago. I have identified this inn as the Half-way House at which Pip alighted from the coach, and breakfasted, on the occasion of his last visit to Miss Havisham at Satis House; afterwards completing his journey to Rochester on foot. He arrived at the Market Town in the evening, when "the best light of the day had gone," and the distance from the "Guy of Warwick" to Rochester (18½ miles), fits in with this; but I could never understand why Pip should wish to take this long walk. If he did not desire to arrive at Satis House until the evening, he could have travelled by an afternoon coach, say, the "Commodore," which left Charing Cross at two o'clock, or by the "Nelson" which started from Gracechurch Street in the city at five o'clock in the afternoon. But there it is: he says he breakfasted at the Half-way House, and walked the rest of the way, arriving in the evening.

The "Guy of Warwick" was probably the half-way house to Gravesend upon which Captain Bunsby of the "Cautious Clara" had his mental eye, when delivering a weighty opinion in the parlour behind Sol Gills's instrument shop in Leadenhall Street.

> "Whereby. Why not. If so. What odds? Can any man say otherwise? No! Awast then."

The "Guy Earl of Warwick" was demolished in 1926, and a new inn erected some little distance to the east. The old building, seen in the accompanying drawing, contained twenty-six rooms but was merely the ostlers' and servants' quarters

attached to the original hostelry, which stood on the opposite side of the road, and was reputed to have been built more than six hundred years ago. The inn was named after a famous knight of the early Middle Ages, whose prowess on the battlefield and at more peaceful tourneys was said to be proverbial. The inn sign of former days (long since disappeared), depicted the knight on horseback, accompanied by what seems to have been intended for a lion (although the sketch once shewn to me by the landlord of the inn was not too clear on that point), the name " Guy of Warwick " appearing below.

I dare say this knight was the Guy Earl of Warwick, nicknamed the " Black Dog of Arden," who abducted Piers Gaveston, the favourite of Edward the Second, and summarily executed him, in the year 1312, in the playful manner of that period.

The tavern was doubtless a resting place for hundreds of pilgrims on their way to the Shrine of Thomas à Becket at Canterbury, and thankful to find themselves safely over the dreaded Shooter's Hill, but still apprehensive of their journey over Bexley Heath on the following day. It is stated that Wat Tyler rested here on his way to Blackheath, when leading the rebellion of Kentish men in 1381.

Several hidden and secret passages were discovered in the demolished building, from which hiding places some old coins and very ancient-looking wine bottles were unearthed. According to local statements, the two portions of the inn were connected by a tunnel passing under the Dover road, the filling in of which was remembered by one of my informants. Be this as it may, I can vouch for the fact that there was, under the road, some kind of a tunnel or cellar that had been

filled up with earth. It was approached by a cupboard door in a passage on the ground floor; and the door, a flight of steps, and a few feet of horizontal tunnel were in evidence in June, 1926.

On the top floor of the house there was another small door in the panelled wall of a long dark passage, which seemed to be next to the outer wall of the building, but was not actually so. This door gave access to another and narrower passage, which really was next to the outer wall, and led, by three or four steps, into a space between the floors of two attics and the ceilings of the rooms below. In this space as many as twenty persons could have hidden, sitting down, with their heads just below the floors of the attics, which were double; and I was informed that it was used as a means of evading the Press gangs who went there seeking to capture involuntary recruits for His Majesty's Navy, during the time of the Napoleonic wars.

The "Guy of Warwick" was just about halfway from Charing Cross to Gravesend, and was the regular stopping place for the Dover coaches. I have been told that there was accommodation for as many as forty horses in the stables behind the building.

Very soon after leaving Welling, we climb up Shooter's Hill but on the reverse slope to that up which the Dover Mail, with Mr. Jarvis Lorry trudging beside it, lumbered one foggy November night in 1775, as related in *A Tale of Two Cities*. In his account of this episode, Dickens anticipated history by a few years, for the first mail coach in this country did not commence to run until the year 1784. There were stage-coaches a hundred years before then, but they were not mail coaches. Dickens's historical

slip, however, does not in the least detract from a wonderfully graphic description of a night journey by the Dover Mail.

Descending Shooter's Hill with Jerry Cruncher, as he and his jaded mare returned more leisurely to the city after the delivery of the message "Recalled to Life," we shortly come to Blackheath, with its memories of Salem House and Mr. Creakle. Exactly where Salem House was, has never been discovered, but it was probably not far from the Dover road, because David Copperfield slept under a near-by haystack, on the first night of his long tramp to Dover. There were no houses then on the Heath itself; such as existed being all on the south side of the Common. Between these and the woods on Shooter's Hill there was hardly a building, except Morden College, which stood at the north-east corner of the Heath.

At Blackheath, too, was the modest little cottage to which John Rokesmith brought his wife Bella, after their marriage at Greenwich, possibly in St. Alphege's Church. Bella was accustomed to walk every morning with her husband to the railway station, which was a short distance from the north-west of Greenwich Park, and was the terminus of the London and Greenwich railway.

After Blackheath, the Dover road takes us into Deptford, and, somewhere about New Cross Gate, we pass out of Kent into Surrey. From New Cross Gate, the Kent road and East Dover Street lead to London Bridge, the end, or the beginning of the Dover road. West of the Old Kent Road is Walworth, a district reaching nearly to Kennington, and bisected by the Walworth road and its southerly continuation Camberwell road.

I am afraid it would be a hopeless task now to find the spot where stood Mr. Wemmick's little

castellated cottage, with its real flagstaff, and the fountain that played so powerfully as to make the back of your hand quite wet. Most likely, it was in the eastern part of Walworth, between the Walworth and Old Kent roads, for hereabouts were the back lanes (not *black* lanes), ponds and ditches described in *Great Expectations*. Mr. Fitch thought Wemmick's castle must have been somewhere between a dismal wilderness called Lock's Field, and a woeful waste known as Walworth Common, both of which are now thickly built over and difficult to find without guidance.

Lock's Field was an open space in 1842, close to the Paragon, and a little west of the angle of Greenwich road and Kent road. Walworth Common was to the south, in a space bounded by Walworth road, East Street, and the Old and New Kent Roads. More than a century ago, there was quite a colony of small houses between the two places, composed chiefly of short rows or terraces of tenements; streets with only one side built upon, and others ending abruptly in fields. Within a short walk of this part, Mr. Fitch recalls that there was a greengrocer in the Old Kent Road whose name was Skiffins.

The same district, as it was in the year 1800, was described by Dickens in the *Sketches by Boz*. In the tale entitled "The Black Veil" he pictured the place as being little better than a dreary waste, over which the young surgeon picked his way to visit the mysterious patient who turned out to have been hanged that morning.

> "The back part of Walworth, at its greatest distance from town, is a straggling, miserable place enough, even in these days; but five and thirty years ago, the greater portion of it was little better than a dreary waste, inhabited by a few scattered people of questionable character. . . .

> "Striking off from the high road, his way lay across a marshy common with here and there a ruinous and dismantled cottage fast falling to pieces with decay and neglect."

Somewhere in this neighbourhood "in the flat country tending to the Thames, where Kent and Surrey meet," were the schools respectively presided over by Bradley Headstone and the devoted Miss Peecher. The schools were newly built, but the district was a medley of market gardens, black ditches, sparkling cucumber frames, and unfinished streets; with a public house facing nowhere, a brick viaduct, an arch-spanned canal, and a general frowsiness and fog. As there was only an interval of two or three years between the writing of the two books *Great Expectations* and *Our Mutual Friend*, it is probable that Dickens's observations of this part of Walworth served for the description in both.

On a certain day, Pip called early at Mr. Wemmick's fortified cottage, and joined that gentleman in a little excursion towards Camberwell Green, Wemmick carrying a fishing rod. If the cottage were in the neighbourhood of Walworth Common, their way was due south, by the Walworth and Camberwell roads. Arrived at Camberwell Green, or thereabouts, the confidential clerk of Mr. Jaggers suddenly exclaimed "Halloa! Here's a church. Let's go in." With the same air of being surprised, he produced a couple of pairs of gloves which he suggested they should put on; and then cried "Halloa! Here's Miss Skiffins. Let's have a wedding." The clergyman and the clerk opportunely appearing, Mr. Wemmick and Miss Skiffins were accordingly married, in the presence of Pip and the aged parent.

I think this was in the old parish church of Saint Giles, Camberwell, afterwards burned down, in 1841. It has been suggested that Saint George's Church, Walworth, was the scene of Wemmick's marriage, but I cannot agree with this. Saint George's Church, built in 1822-1824, is not at Camberwell Green, nor even thereabouts, and the font formerly in that church was a large and rather cumbrous affair like a huge ornamental flowerpot, with no cover to it for the bridegroom to lift, for the purpose of depositing his gloves in that receptacle. The period of the story of *Great Expectations* was prior to 1823, and I have no doubt that the church Dickens had in mind was that of Saint Giles, which was close to Camberwell Green and might almost be said to be on the Green.

After the wedding, the happy party proceeded to a pleasant little tavern upon rising ground beyond the Green, where an excellent breakfast, provided by contract, awaited them. The rising ground was Denmark Hill, leading southwards from Camberwell Green to Herne Hill; and the pleasant little tavern was probably the "Fox under the Hill" half-way up the rising ground. The "Fox under the Hill," however, is only about half-a-mile from the Green, instead of "a mile or so," but as its character fitted the description of a "pleasant little tavern," and there was no other inn at that part, it was very likely the place Dickens meant.

Continuing with Pip on the Rochester coach, we soon reach the Borough and its High Street. On the left hand is Lant Street, where Mr. Bob Sawyer lodged, and where he gave a not too successful party, owing to Mrs. Raddle having raked out the kitchen fire and locked up the "Kittle" before she went to bed.

Describing Lant Street in *The Pickwick Papers*, Dickens said there were, among its inhabitants, one or two prison agents for the Insolvent Court; and at the house of one such agent he had himself lodged as a boy, when his father was imprisoned in the Marshalsea. David Copperfield was afterwards made to occupy the same lodgings when Mr. Micawber was incarcerated on civil process in the King's Bench, close by.

The particular agent of the Insolvent Debtors' Court with whom Dickens lodged in 1824, was a good-natured man, with a good-natured family, who were very kind to the small boy. Years afterwards, their one-time lodger remembered them very pleasantly as the Garland family, in *The Old Curiosity Shop*.

Probably Mr. Cripples's academy, where Frederick Dorrit lodged, and where the doorpost was "as full of bell-handles as a Cathedral organ is full of stops," was also in Lant Street. Union Road, opposite Borough Road, was formerly called Horsemonger Lane, in which was the snug little tobacco business at which Little Dorrit's admirer, Young John Chivery, assisted his mother. In this road was Horsemonger Lane Jail, where Dickens witnessed the execution of the Mannings in 1849.

Passing Saint George's Church on the main road, we are again reminded of Little Dorrit, who was baptised and married here; and of the Marshalsea, the remains of which are to be found up Angel Place, close by. The bit of the prison still in existence is part of the Marshalsea in which Mr. Dorrit was confined for so many years, and which was built about the year 1811. There had been an older Marshalsea, which stood between Newcomen Street and Mermaid Court, a little nearer to London Bridge.

Of all the galleried coaching inns for which Southwark was famous, the " George," which we pass on our right hand, is the only one remaining. Even this is sadly curtailed, only one side of the inn being left and its one-time coach-yard, like many other similar places, is invaded by railway vans ; but what remains is very attractive, and sufficient to give a good idea of the old picturesque galleried inns of the coaching days, with their quaint little windows and old-fashioned coffee rooms. The bar of the " George " is a perfect picture of similar places often described by Dickens.

The " White Hart," in the yard of which Mr. Pickwick first encountered the immortal Sam Weller, was just such another inn as the " George," and was only a few doors distant. All trace of the " White Hart " has now disappeared.

The George Inn was mentioned in *Little Dorrit* as the inn from which Tip Dorrit indited a begging letter to Arthur Clennam. Probably he wrote that letter in the coffee room, which is still just as when Dickens knew it, and I hope will continue to remain so for many years to come.

IX

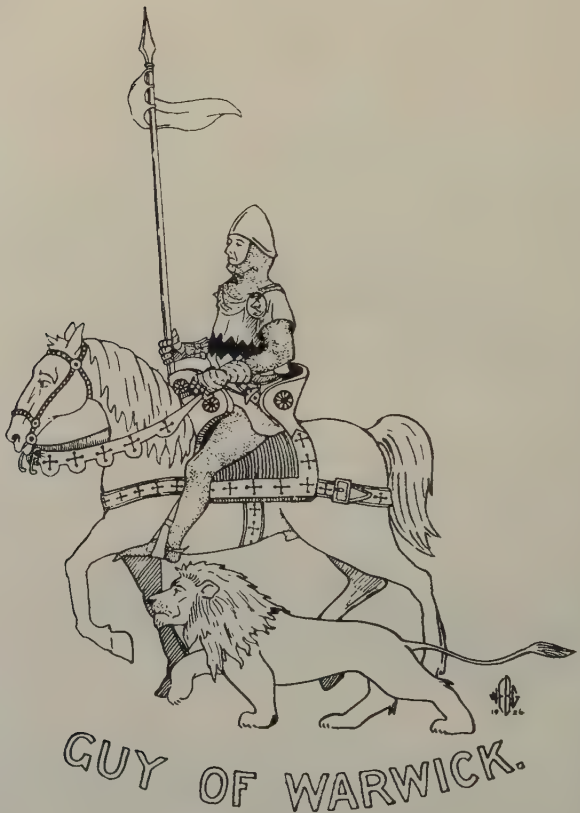
THE RIVER JOURNEY

> "Our plan was this: The tide, beginning to run down at nine, and being with us until three, we intended still to creep on after it had turned, and row against it until dark. We should then be well in those long reaches below Gravesend, between Kent and Essex, where the river is broad and solitary, where the water-side inhabitants are very few, and where lone public-houses are scattered here and there, of which we could choose one for a resting-place. There we meant to lie by all night."

PIP and Herbert Pocket moved from Barnard's Inn to the Temple, when the former young man was twenty-two years old; and, needless to say, they launched out into greater extravagance in their new abode. They had occupied chambers in Garden Court for about one year before Magwitch returned to England from Botany Bay and disclosed himself as Pip's benefactor.

These chambers were at the top of number six, Plowden Buildings, and at that time the river was nearer than now, the Embankment not having been as yet, constructed. Consequently, on the night of the first visit of the returned convict Provis, the wind and the driving rain rushing up the river made Pip fancy he might be sitting alone in a storm-beaten lighthouse. He was alone because business had taken Herbert Pocket to Marseilles.

Since the period of *Great Expectations*, a new block of offices has been built between Plowden Buildings and the Embankment, and the erection of this block was probably what Pip referred to



Inn Sign of the "Guy Earl of Warwick"
(*Drawn by Major W. E. B. Gadd*)

when he said: "Alterations have been made in that part of the Temple since that time, and it has not now so lonely a character as it had then, nor is it so exposed to the river." There is, however, a narrow gap between the old and the new buildings, which are thus quite distinct.

When Pip was recovering from a serious illness, in which he was nursed by dear old Joe Gargery, a carriage was brought into the lane, in order to take the invalid for an airing. This lane is Middle Temple Lane, in which is the entrance to the chambers in Plowden Buildings.

Close by were the Temple stairs, where Pip had been in the habit of keeping a boat ever since it had been decided to make an attempt to get Magwitch out of the country. It was also his habit to row up and down the river, in all weathers, so that he and his boat might become familiar objects on the water, and excite no suspicion when the time came to put the project into execution.

Magwitch, who now passed as Mr. Campbell, had for some time been lodged at the house of Mrs. Whimple, at Mill Pond Bank, Chink's Basin, which was a house with a bow window, by the river side, down the Pool. At Mrs. Whimple's, too, Herbert Pocket's intended wife Clara dwelt with her choleric old father, who, formerly a ship's purser, was now permanently "lying on the flat of his back, like a drifting old dead flounder," owing to gout and rheumatism, assisted by a judicious diet of rum and black pepper.

It seemed a queer house to Pip, who saw upon the parlour mantelpiece, a collection of shells, and on the wall, a coloured engraving representing "His Majesty George the Third in a State

coachman's wig, leather breeches, and top boots, on the terrace at Windsor." I mention this last item as an instance of Dickens's observation. An engraving depicting their Majesties and the Royal family walking on the terrace at Windsor Castle, was published in 1771. In this, the King was shewn wearing a large wig, breeches and top boots. Dickens had evidently seen this engraving somewhere, and introduced it into Mrs. Whimple's parlour.

It was about half-past eight on a March morning, when the sun shines hot and the wind blows cold, that the three friends, Pip, Herbert and Startop, went down to the Temple Stairs and embarked upon the expedition that was to end in the recapture of Magwitch. It was just about high-tide, and they dropped easily down on the slack water, to London Bridge—Old London Bridge in those days, although the houses had been removed and the heads of traitors had long ceased to be exposed on pikes over the south gate. At certain states of the tide there was a dangerous race of water between the starlings of the old bridge, but Pip had already learned how to negotiate the passage.

Between Southwark Bridge, which was of iron, and London Bridge which was of stone, the bird of prey, Gaffer Hexam, and that honest man of toil, Rogue Riderhood, were, at a later date, wont to ply their gruesome trade on the river; sometimes with disappointing results, and sometimes "in luck, by George!" the luck being towed home in the wake of the boat.

> "A neophite might have fancied that the ripples passing over it were dreadfully like faint changes of expression on a sightless face; but Gaffer was no neophite and had no fancies."

Southwark Bridge was the iron bridge upon which Little Dorrit loved to walk; and if Pip's river journey were made as late as 1819, his boat passed under it.

This part of the river was also described in one of the *re-printed pieces* entitled "Down with the tide." In this article, Dickens related how the crew of a four-oared Thames Police boat, in which vessel he was a passenger, lay on their oars in the deep shadow of Southwark Bridge, one very dark night when watching certain water rats, or river-thieves; and held on pretty tightly too, for the river was swollen and the tide ran strongly.

But my present business is with Pip's boat, on its way to pick up Provis at Chinks's Basin, and then on with the tide to Gravesend and the lower reaches of the river.

London Bridge was soon passed, and Billingsgate market, with its oyster boats and Dutchmen. The latter craft are still to be seen any day, off the Custom House—squat, bluff-bowed and gaily painted eel boats, with a low freeboard amidships —that come up the Thames every day and moor off Billingsgate, always in the same place. They are popularly supposed to have some ancient rights to their particular moorings, but I am authoritatively informed that this is not so. They retain the mooring by the simple expedient of one boat hanging on until another comes up to take over.

Pip had sometimes left his boat at the Custom House, to be afterwards brought up to the Temple, when he had been as far down the river as Erith; and now this, and the White Tower and Traitor's Gate, and Quilp's Wharf on the Surrey side, were passed in quick succession, and the friends were among the steamers and barges, and colliers dis-

charging their freights at the various wharves on both sides of the river. They were now among the tiers of shipping in the Pool, and, noting the Rotterdam and Hamburg steamers due to sail on the morrow, passed under the bowsprit of one of them.

To the three friends in the boat, the river would appear to be much wider than when viewed from the bank, or from the deck of a ship, and the boat itself a relatively very small object, especially when passing close to the tall and rusty iron sides of some moored steamer. A seaman possibly peering down at them from the apparently immense height of her bridge, would be much more remote from their concern than the great links of the anchor cable, splitting the tide into two bubbling lines of foam. And now, Pip, sitting in the stern, could see Mill Pond Bank and Mill Pond Stairs close ahead.

Mill Pond Bank was at Rotherhithe, on the Surrey side of the Lower Pool, and west of the Surrey Commercial Docks. The district has been much altered, but, in the early part of the last century, an elongated sheet of water called ' Mill Pond,' lay in the region north of the present Southwark Park, its lower end being separated from the Thames only by the thoroughfare known as Rotherhithe or Redriff. On the west side, its approaches were by Jamaica Row (now Jamaica Road), and Blue Anchor Lane ; on the east were Love Lane and the Old and New Paradise Streets. According to Wemmick, Mill Pond Bank was " by the river side, down the Pool there, between Limehouse and Greenwich," and was a fresh kind of place, where the wind from the river had room to turn itself round. Not far from the pond, was a thoroughfare called Rope-walk, and a little

nearer to London Bridge there were four actual rope walks, but I cannot take upon myself to say which of these (all now vanished), was the " Old Green Copper."

The house with the bow window was evidently on the Rotherhithe and facing the river, for Provis used to pull down the blind of a window facing east, to shew that all was well, when Pip occasionally rowed down to Erith, prior to the actual expedition ; and old Bill Barley spent most of his time with one eye at a telescope, which was fitted on his bed for the convenience of sweeping the river. Also, Provis was to come down to some stairs " hard by the house " when the time came for him to be taken into the boat.

There were several stairs along the Redriff near Mill Pond, but none named Mill Pond Stairs. From west to east, they were Fountain Stairs ; Cherry Garden Stairs (reminiscent of a popular resort of the reign of Charles the Second, and on the site of the present Cherry Gardens Pier) ; West Lane Stairs ; Redriff Stairs, and King's Stairs. Perhaps Mill Pond *Bank* was the Rotherhithe itself, but the stairs nearest to the Mill Pond were the West Lane and the Redriff Stairs. From one of these stairs Provis probably stepped into the boat, as its progress was arrested there for a moment.

There is only one difficulty about this identification, which, otherwise, fits in with the story perfectly well. Wemmick said " down the Pool there, between Limehouse and Greenwich." Between these two places lies the whole length of Limehouse Reach, trending southwards, while the Lower Pool trends northwards. In Limehouse Reach, the only district in which Chinks's Basin could be situated is Deptford, and I can find

nothing there corresponding to Mill Pond Bank. Moreover, it would be quite impossible for Pip to see any stairs on the Surrey side of Limehouse Reach from the Lower Pool where his boat appears to have been when he sighted the stairs; so I am obliged to get over the difficulty by assuming that Mr. Wemmick made a mistake.

Half-a-mile, or so, west of Cherry Gardens Pier, is St. Saviour's Dock, on the east side of which was Jacob's Island, north of a street called Dockhead. Here stood the disreputable house, up Metcalf Court from Jacob Street, where Bill Sikes met his end, as recorded in *Oliver Twist*.

On the other side of the river, nearly opposite to Mill Pond Bank, is Wapping Old Stairs and Execution Dock, where pirates were sometimes put to death by being secured to a stout post planted in the mud below high water, and left there until three tides had completely immersed them.

Close by is a river-side Inn known as the "Town of Ramsgate."

At the upper end of Limehouse Reach, about a mile beyond Mill Pond Bank, the tower of Limehouse Church is a conspicuous landmark from the river. Limehouse is particularly the region of *Our Mutual Friend*. Miss Abbey Potterson, the redoubtable landlady of the "Six Jolly Fellowship Porters," was christened in the church, and John Harmon waited near that edifice for his false friend Radfoot, on the night of his disembarkation, when he was drugged and robbed, and thrown into the river. At No. 5 Church Row, Dickens sometimes visited his godfather Christopher Huffam, a rigger in His Majesty's Navy; and somewhere on the river bank, not far from the church, was the old mill that served Gaffer

Hexam for a dwelling, with a rotten wart on its forehead, where the sails had once been. In Narrow Street, still stands the " Grapes " Inn, the original of the " Six Jolly Fellowship Porters," the river front of which is practically unaltered since Dickens described it. The Harbour Master's house, which adjoined the inn, and which is usually included in drawings or photographs of the tavern, has now been demolished, and the picturesque view of the river front of the " Porters " has suffered somewhat in consequence. The upper room, overlooking the river, in which the inquest on the body of the supposed John Harmon *may* have been held (although the book does not definitely indicate this), and the little room behind the bar, which was Miss Abbey's sanctum, are probably quite unchanged since Dickens saw them. It was in Miss Potterson's first floor bedroom that Mr. Riderhood had his little " turn-up with Death " and was resuscitated after being run down in the fog by a " busted b'low bridger."

Dickens took the name he gave to the Inn from an ancient society founded in 1155, and known as the Fellowship Porters. The members were, for centuries, recognised as the proper stevedores for loading and unloading ships at the Port of London, between Southend and the London Stone at Staines.

Originally, the Society numbered about 3,000 members, but when it was disbanded in 1894, there were only about two dozen left, all very old men.

Not far from Limehouse Church is the district of Saint George's in the East, where Lascar Sal once kept the opium den visited by John Jasper, in a squalid little court near Ratcliff Highway

(renamed St. George Street). There were several such dens in Limehouse and Shadwell when *Edwin Drood* was written, one notorious place being that of a certain Johnstone, off Ratcliff Highway, and stated by the younger Charles Dickens, in 1879, to be the actual den resorted to by Jasper. There is no doubt, however, that in 1869 Dickens himself took his American friend, J. T. Fields, to see Lascar Sal's room, in New Court, where they heard the wretched old hag mutter the very words used by the Princess Puffer of the story.

Chinese opium dens are not readily found in East London nowadays, if they exist at all. Two or three years ago, I asked the manager of "Paddy's Goose," the headquarters of the Highways Club (but once a disreputable public house wherein sailor-men were drugged and robbed and ill treated), if there were any opium smoking dens in the neighbourhood. His reply was that they were not *supposed* to exist.

I must not linger here any longer, for by this time, the falling tide is running down more strongly and our boat is making good headway down Greenwich Reach.

Here the twin domes of the Naval Hospital are the most striking objects, with the observatory on the hill behind. The view from the river of the noble façade of Greenwich Hospital is now marred by the proximity of two bloated factory chimneys, which insist upon being included in the picture. The tower of the parish church of Saint Alphege, in the middle distance, is graceful and in keeping with the hospital buildings. This church was built in 1718, and was the scene of Bella Wilfer's marriage to John Rokesmith.

Greenwich Hospital was opened for the recep-

tion of disabled seamen in 1705, and converted into a Naval College in 1873. The Museum contains some very interesting Nelson and Franklin relics.

We have already passed the Ship Hotel, formerly noted for whitebait dinners, and the scene of Bella Wilfer's marriage dinner. A happy party of three, waited upon by His Grace the Archbishop of Greenwich.

And what a dinner it was! Specimens of all the fish that swim in the seas! All the dishes seasoned with bliss! And the golden drinks, bottled in a golden age, that had been hoarding up their sparkling bubbles ever since!

That was a happy dinner, but few dinners at Greenwich can have been more jovial than the one that celebrated Dickens's return from America, in 1842. Talfourd, Maclise, Stanfield, Marryat, Milne, Proctor, Hood, Cruikshank and Forster were all present, but whether they were waited upon by Bella Wilfer's clerical dignitary I know not. The Cornwall tour was arranged at this dinner between Dickens, Forster, Stanfield, and Maclise.

Dickens met Douglas Jerrold, for the last time, at another Greenwich dinner, after a drive over Blackheath, shortly before the sudden death of Jerrold, in 1856.

On the opposite side of the river is the Isle of Dogs, now a populous dock district, but in Pip's day a barren marsh, on which several gibbets, with the bodies of pirates suspended from them, were erected along the muddy shore. At the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, there were sometimes three or four blackened carcases swinging there at one time, and the boatmen of Greenwich reaped a small

harvest by making a charge for the privilege of viewing the distant pirates through a telescope.

At the lower end of Greenwich Reach is Blackwall Reach, and here we pass the Trinity House Wharf, with rows of parti-coloured buoys ready to be sent to any part of the coast, as required; and keeping in the run of the ebb tide, we round Blackwall point on Bugsby's Marsh.

Quilp, the dwarf in *The Old Curiosity Shop*, was drowned somewhere near the present Tower Bridge, and his body is supposed to have been washed ashore on Bugsby's Marsh. I do not know who originated this idea, which seems to have been accepted by writers on Dickens topography, nor am I aware of the reasons that led to the suggestion. In the book, we read that the river :—

> " toyed and sported with its ghastly freight, now bruising it against the slimy piles, now hiding it in mud or long rank grass, now dragging it heavily over rough stones and gravel, now feigning to yield it to its own element, and in the same action luring it away, until, tired of the ugly plaything, it flung it on a swamp—a dismal place where pirates had swung in chains through many a wintry night—and left it there to bleach."

The passage, however, does not indicate any precise spot, unless the mention of gibbeted pirates suggests the Isle of Dogs. As a rule, the bodies of persons drowned in the Thames are recovered within a few miles of where they went into the water, even if they have floated up and down on several tides, but the place where they eventually come ashore depends upon the currents and eddies set up at different parts of the river's course. I suppose a knowledge of these eddies and whirlpools to be as much an essential part of a river pilot's qualifications as is an acquaintance with the underwater shoals and depths, and the navigation

marks by which big ships are brought up the river as far as the East and West India Docks.

The set of the tide, and the eddies in Blackwall Reach are such that Quilp's body would certainly not be washed up on Bugsby's Marsh, if coming down on the ebb tide, but on the Blackwall side, somewhere about Bow Creek, in Bugsby's Reach. On the other hand, if the body were carried some distance down river, and came up again on a succeeding flood tide, it might be washed ashore on Bugsby's Marsh, on the Blackwall Reach side, if it came ashore at all in that part of the river.

I have given this much consideration to the question of Mr. Quilp's body, not because I have a particularly morbid interest in its disposal, but because, as Mr. Inspector once remarked of an expedition to the " Six Jolly Fellowship Porters " it is " a little matter of identification," and I am interested in the tidal currents in the Thames for various reasons, one of which will presently appear.

Beyond Woolwich Reach, which need not detain us, we gain Gallions, where the water deepens to twenty feet or more at low tide ; and, at night, we see ahead of us a light, flashing at four-second intervals, on Tripcock Point.

Before this, our boat party would have been free of the tiers of shipping, past the " John of Sutherland," and the " Betsy of Yarmouth," and would be moving in a less congested stream, where ships could shake out their sails, and ships' boys need no longer fish in troubled waters with fenders. At that time, the country hereabouts was more open, and where we now see warehouses and factories, chimneys, and streets of houses, Pip saw only marshland and muddy creeks. On the Kentish side of Gallions and

Barking Reaches, wide tracts of the Plumstead and Erith marshes yet remain, backed by the distant hills and woods about Shooter's Hill and Belvedere. On the Essex side, the country is flat, from about Dagenham, but broken here and there by huge mounds of refuse, that have been raised on the marshes and remind us of Mr. Boffin's mounds at Battle Bridge. At Crossness and Jenningtree Points, on the Kentish side, are occulting lights for the guidance of pilots and ship-masters.

At Crossness Point we pass a number of decayed and blackened stakes and timbers; all that remains of a derelict pier or landing stage, the one-time purpose of which is beyond my ken. The locality is merely a dismal swamp, as dismal now as when Pip saw it; but there is a public house there, known as the Half-Way House, and I suppose must be half-way to somewhere.

The Erith marshes seem to be the winter quarters of all the gypsies and itinerant brush and basketmakers in the Kingdom, for, in the off season, scores of their caravans are parked on the marsh, alongside the railway line.

Another bend in the river brings us into Erith Rands, with the town of Erith in the bend, opposite the light on Cold-Harbour Point.

Erith is very drab and uninteresting, but the parish church there is ancient and quaint in design. Pip would see its squat spire from the river, as his boat passed what was then a mere village.

The bluff at Purfleet, with a fairly wooded bit of country behind it, stands out boldly on the Essex side, at the head of Long Reach, at the lower end of which is Greenhithe. Queen Elizabeth halted at Purfleet in August, 1588, on her way to review

the troops at Tilbury Fort. The "Cornwall" training ship for boys was moored off Purfleet for many years, but has recently been moved to below Gravesend. The training ships "Warspite" and "Arethusa" are at Greenhithe, where also is the "Worcester," a training school for cadets destined for ships' officers in the Mercantile Marine.

Approaching Greenhithe, we pass a row of huge silos made of concrete, described by Donald Maxwell as "The Giant Jars of Greenhithe." Seen by moonlight, with a galaxy of electric lights at their feet, these giant jars have quite an eastern appearance and seem to belong to a scene from the "Arabian Nights," instead of to a very modern cement factory.

The Greenhithe that Pip saw, on his river journey, was a little riverside village of one street, backed by green and wooded hills of some altitude. It was here that our boat party landed at a little stone causeway, to purchase some bottled beer, Provis remaining quietly in the boat.

I am pretty sure that the "White Hart" Inn at Greenhithe supplied the bottled beer, because it is easily the most likely of the two or three Inns, between London Bridge and Gravesend, that conform to the necessary conditions.

Forster tells us that Dickens, in order to make himself sure of the proper course a boat should follow down the river, and what possible incidents would be met with on such a journey, hired a steamer, in May, 1861, to take him from Blackwall to Southend. Forster adds that Dickens's sleepless observation of the river and its banks was at work throughout the trip and that nothing escaped his keen vision on either side of the stream.

The first part of the boat journey, down to the inn where the bottled beer was obtained, is not described in Chapter 54 of *Great Expectations* with sufficient detail to enable me to follow the actual course taken, but in the account of the later portion of the run, below Gravesend, the references are quite clear enough to indicate the movements of the boat without the slightest doubt, and, in this part of the river, it is unquestionable that Dickens caused the party to follow the proper and only practicable route against a flood tide. Anyone with experience of rowing on a tidal stream will appreciate the difficulty of pulling for ten or twelve miles against a tide running at five or six knots per hour, and Dickens rightly ascertained the route by which a rowing boat could make headway, keeping in slack water all the way. I, therefore, give him credit for having been as accurate with regard to the portion of river above Gravesend as with the portion below that town.

Dickens's observation must indeed have been marvellously exact, and his memory most retentive if his account of the river journey was based upon a single day's run from Blackwall to Southend. I think it evinces a much closer acquaintance with the river than that; although I imagine he did ascertain on that trip the right and proper course for a boat, coming down on the ebb tide as far as Gravesend and then against the tide to the journey's end. On this I base the identification of the "White Hart" at Greenhithe.

The ebb tide, in passing from one Reach to another, between London and Gravesend, sets generally towards the shore immediately facing it, and not smoothly round the intervening points of land. This produces the eddies and whirlpools already mentioned, which a rowing boat is com-

Old Saint Giles's Church, Camberwell

pelled to avoid. There is thus a particular course which Pip's boat should have followed all the way down, and this would depend upon the varying state of the tide throughout the day. The tide was with the party until they reached Gravesend, at about three o'clock in the afternoon, from which information it is not difficult to compute the route followed down the different Reaches.

I consider that the inn, where the party went ashore to buy bottled beer, must have been close to the riverside, visible from the water, and on the proper side for a landing in the particular Reach. It is also certain that, under the circumstances, some quiet, out-of-the-way place would be chosen, it being imperative to avoid chance meetings with Customs or other officials, and to give rise to no suspicion as to the object of the journey. As already stated, there are very few taverns, between London and Gravesend, that satisfy these conditions, and of these few, the "White Hart" at Greenhithe, is the only one free from objection, on one ground or another. I have no doubt that Dickens spotted the inn, and its stone causeway, on his trip down the river in 1861.

Greenhithe has lost much of its former rural character and beauty, being now overshadowed by two large cement works, which have necessitated the building of numerous houses for the workers. Several of the old wooden houses in the original village have been demolished within recent years, one of them being the ancient "Brown Bear" tavern.

The "White Hart" faces the river, and has its own little stone causeway, at which our party landed. The causeway is, however, being repaired and the rough stones coated over with

smooth cement, even as I write. Sir John Franklin spent his last night in England at this inn, his ships "Erebus" and "Terror" lying at Greenhithe ready to sail on the following morning for the arctic seas, in quest of the north-west passage. It was on the 18th of May, 1845, that the ships left Greenhithe, and of the mariners that sailed down the Thames that sunny morning, Sir John Franklin and one hundred and thirty-three officers and men never came back. Not until fourteen years had elapsed was their tragic fate known.

On a hill, to the west of Greenhithe village, the tower of Stone Church is seen from the river. This is one of the most interesting village churches in Kent, but seems to be visited by few, with the exception of architects and antiquarians. It was erected by the builder of Westminster Abbey, and at about the same time; and resembles a cathedral in miniature, very unlike the majority of village churches.

Stone Church has been known to generations of boatmen as the "Lantern of Kent," the name being said to have originated in a joke perpetrated by the tilt-boat men, who used to point out the church to passengers and aver that it was "as light at midnight as at noonday"—meaning its *weight*.

A little east of Greenhithe is all that remains of Ingress Abbey in a pretty bit of parkland. The mansion of the same name is near by, and was built in 1835 by Alderman John Harmer, of Gravesend, largely of stones brought from the demolished old London Bridge.

X

THE RIVER JOURNEY (*Continued*)

> "I had always proposed to myself to get him well down the river in the boat; certainly well beyond Gravesend, which was a critical place for search or enquiry if suspicion were afoot. As foreign steamers would leave London at about the time of high tide, our plan would be to get down the river by a previous ebb tide, and to lie by in some quiet spot until we could pull off to one."

LEAVING Greenhithe, we continue our journey down Saint Clement's Reach, with marsh land on both sides of the river. On the Essex side, the square tower of Saint Clement's Church is seen close to the river bank; and near it a beacon, one of the few yet remaining on the riverside.

Saint Clement's Church is an ancient edifice, built upon the foundations of an older Saxon church, and is the parish church of West Thorrock —a name supposed to have been derived from "Thor's Oak." In mediæval times it was the last church at which pilgrims from East Anglia rested before crossing the river, on their way to Canterbury. A causeway over the Swanscombe marshes, on the Kentish side, then led to Galley Hill and to Watling Street. The lane from the marshes (now concreted to carry the heavy traffic connected with the Swanscombe cement factory), is still called the Pilgrim's Way.

Opposite Broadness, at the end of Saint Clement's Reach, is a dangerous shoal known as the Black Shelf; and in the bend between Saint Clement's Reach and Northfleet Hope lies the

town of Grays, off which is moored the training ship "Exmouth."

Mention of the Black Shelf reminds me that I once assisted in the rescue of a bargeman, whose craft was wrecked on that ledge one wintry night when a gale of wind was blowing. I happened to be in the office of a friend whose duties necessitated his remaining there all night, when word was brought in that a barge had been driven ashore on Black Shelf, and was breaking up.

We at once donned oilskin coats and went out to the riverside, where we found a group of workmen, down in the mud and water below the seawall, endeavouring to secure the body of a man that was being tumbled about in the breakers. After considerable trouble and a thorough wetting, we got the man ashore and carried him into my friend's office where he was laid down on the hearthrug in front of the fire, whilst artificial respiration was resorted to, and other means taken to revive him. In the course of these efforts, I loosened the man's clothing, and discovered that he was wearing round his neck a piece of cord to which was attached a tiny glass bottle containing a little mercury.

I was given to understand that many seamen regard this talisman as a charm against drowning, and I mention it as a curious instance of superstitious credulity that I have not seen referred to in any book.

I am glad to record that the man recovered and, before morning, was able to take some hot coffee and a meal of sandwiches, before being sent home in a cab and with dry clothes. I dare say his faith in the talisman was strengthened by his experience.

Near to the town of Grays, there is a small copse called "Hangman's Wood," in which is to

be found quite a collection of those curious excavations in the chalk known as Dene, or Dane Holes. These are narrow vertical shafts, forty or fifty feet deep, opening out at the bottom into trefoil-shaped chambers. Certain antiquarians hold that they have been dug merely for chalk to be used for agricultural purposes; but it is, in that case, difficult to understand why they should have been so carefully and accurately shaped, and the general belief is that they were hiding places or storehouses for grain, at the period of the Danish invasions.

From Broadness Point, on which is a light, we pass down the west side of Northfleet Hope with marsh land on both sides, and so into Gravesend Reach.

On the right hand, as we approach the cement factory at Northfleet, we see the tower of the chapel at Huggen's College, upon the rising ground a little back from the river.

Huggen's College is a meritorious institution founded about 1847, for the benefit of middle-class old ladies in reduced circumstances. There are fifty small houses there, arranged in a square with an inner quadrangle. Each of the fifty inmates is allotted a house, together with an allowance of twenty-two shillings per week; but most of them have some small private means in addition. The College has its own Chapel with resident Chaplain; an interesting reading room, and a porter's lodge. The enclosed grounds cover some twenty acres, are tastefully laid out and are pleasantly diversified by trees and grassland.

Gravesend Reach extends from Tilbury Ness to Coal House Point a distance of four nautical miles. This is the busiest part of the river, Gravesend being the entrance to the Port of London; and

the official anchorage for shipping is just below the town. Here, ships take up or drop their pilots, whose headquarters are at the Terrace Pier, where the late Queen Alexandra first landed in England, when she came over from Denmark to be married to our King Edward, then Prince of Wales.

There are two classes of Trinity House Pilots; the River Pilots who navigate ships between Gravesend and London Bridge, and the Channel Pilots who take ships out to sea, through the tortuous channels between the sandbanks at the mouth of the estuary, and on to Dover—sometimes even further.

In Gravesend Reach, one may see, riding at anchor or passing up and down river, ships of many nations, all flying their national ensigns, among which the "Red Duster" naturally predominates, though American, Swedish, Norwegian, Dutch, French and German flags are often to be seen. These, with the house flags of shipping lines, the signal flags denoting that a ship is about to sail or that the pilot is aboard, and the varied colours of the steamers' funnels, give quite a gay appearance to the river, especially when the sun shines. Here, for example, are the sombre black funnels of a large P. & O. Liner which is about to sail for India and is flying the Blue Peter, the red and white pilot's flag, and at her stern, the blue ensign, her Captain being an Officer of the Royal Naval Reserve. Astern of her, we see the light grey hull and salmon-coloured funnels of a Union Castle boat, for South Africa. A little beyond, lies a steamer flying the yellow Saint George's Cross of Sweden, her two funnels emblazoned with large white stars; whilst forging slowly up the fairway, comes an Orient Liner, homeward bound from Australia, with a string of

launches clinging to her sides as she moves along —Customs, Port Sanitary, Pilot and perhaps other launches that have boarded her lower down river.

The surface of the stream is dotted with barges tacking up against the wind, their rich brown sails (many bearing a blue circle, the mark of the Associated Portland Cement Companies), adding to the colour scheme; whilst tramp steamers pass up and down, and fussy steam-tugs cleave their powerful way through the water in every direction. The graceful sailing ships of Pip's day are rarely to be seen, although Swedish and Norwegian barques, timber laden—and pretty heavily laden too—come up now and then. In my estimation, there is no more pretty sight on the sea than a square-rigged windjammer.

Soon after entering Gravesend Reach, we pass the site of the once famous Rosherville Gardens, derelict these many years. Part of the gardens is now covered by factory buildings and the rest is just a wilderness. On the opposite side of the river are the Tilbury Docks, and lower down, a new deep-water landing stage is in course of erection.

Viewed from the river, the town of Gravesend has rather a picturesque appearance, the jumble of houses by the riverside being dominated by the tower of Saint George's Church. The narrow High Street running up-hill from the Town Pier, and presenting a veritable avenue of sign boards overhanging the pavements, is part of the older town, which was originally all down by the river.

Behind the town, the land rises to the south in a series of green and wooded hills to the top of the North Downs, ten miles away.

Pip and his companions in the boat reached Gravesend at about three o'clock in the afternoon, when the last of the ebb tide was still with them,

Pip purposely steering close in to the Custom House boat and out into the stream again.

The tide now began to slacken and to turn, and the craft at anchor to swing, so Pip steered for the Essex side in order to find easy water ; and, as that is the correct course for a rowing boat against the flood tide, we follow him. Dickens does not say the boat went across to the north side, but there is no doubt about it, because Pip states that the ships taking advantage of the new tide crowded upon him in a fleet ; and ships must come up on the north side of a line drawn from Northfleet Beacon to a point west of Shornmead Fort, whilst vessels about to anchor must do so south of that line. At night, the light on Northfleet Beacon shews red over the anchorage and white over the fairway.

Following Pip's boat, we keep close to the north shore, passing Tilbury Fort (with its rivergate built by Charles the Second), and a little tavern with the rather unusual sign of " The World's End." I dare say this inn justified its name at one time, for the Tilbury marshes were dreary enough, even within my own recollection.

At Coalhouse Point, three or four miles below Gravesend, a spit or tongue of mud runs out to the centre of the river and forms the southern extremity of the extensive Mucking Flats. The spit is marked by a black conical buoy carrying an occulting gaslight and, at low tide, boats of even shallow draught must round this buoy to clear the shoal water.

This spit is the " low shallow and mudbank " which Pip carefully avoided, after creeping along the shore to keep out of the tideway.

We are now in the Lower Hope, a stretch of river running almost due north, whereas, the Reach we have just left runs practically west to

east. On our left hand stretch the Mucking Flats, occupying one-third of the river's breadth, but covered with shallow water at high tide. The slack water in the Lower Hope, as also the deep water channel, is on the eastern side, so we continue beyond the Ovens buoy to that side of the river, passing the mouths of Higham and Cliffe creeks, and close under the concrete walls of Cliffe Fort. The marshes on our right hand are Pip's own marshes, and on his boat journey he passed close to the old battery and the beacon of his childhood.

By way of verifying our position, I may as well take soundings here by referring to the original manuscript of *Great Expectations*, mention in which of this part of the river was altered by Dickens in the proof sheets. In Chapter 54, the printed book has the following passage :—

> " The steamer for Hamburg and the steamer for Rotterdam would start from London at about nine on Thursday morning. We should know at what time to expect them, according to where we were, and would hail the first."

In the first proof sheets, the words " Thursday morning," were followed by :—

> " *and would be in our part of the river at about noon.*"

The words in italics do not appear in the printed editions.

After passing the old beacon at the mouth of Cliffe creek our boat party continued to hug the shore nearly as far as Lower Hope Point, whence they struck across to the Essex side to find the slack water in Sea Reach. Here they landed; and we will follow their example.

> " We got ashore among some slippery stones while we ate and drank what we had with us, and looked about. It was like my own marsh country, flat and monotonous, and with a distant horizon;

> while the winding river turned and turned, and the great floating buoys upon it turned and turned, and everything else seemed stranded and still, and some ballast lighters, shaped like a child's first rude imitation of a boat, lay low in the mud ; and a little squat shoal lighthouse on open piles stood crippled in the mud on stilts and crutches ; and slimy stakes stuck out of the mud . . . and all about us was stagnation and mud."

The slippery stones upon which we land form a stony spit, running out anglewise from the shore into the mud of Mucking Flats, a little to the west of the lighthouse. It is the only spot hereabouts, and for some distance in either direction, upon which Pip and his party could possibly have landed, the shores elsewhere being composed of very soft and treacherous mud.

Close by is a number of slimy black stakes, sticking up out of the mud, and known to pilots and watermen as the ' Farmer's Teeth.' Whether these stakes are the remains of an ancient and forgotten landing place of some kind I know not, but they have been on the spot as long as the oldest Gravesend waterman can remember.

To the west and south of the spit of loose and slippery stones stretch the Mucking Flats, at low tide a broad expanse of soft mud in which a man would sink to his waist (as Mr. Markham, Steerforth's friend, might say), and along the cant edge of which lie at anchor certain powder hulks, roofed and mastless, looking like dilapidated old Noah's Arks, sometimes afloat and sometimes stranded, according to the state of the tide. Each of these powder hulks is in the charge of a caretaker who is very grateful if you throw him a bundle of newspapers or magazines as you pass ; whilst a bottle of beer will command the utmost service within his power to bestow.

Eastwards, Sea Reach stretches for thirteen miles to the Nore Lightship, and close to us is Mucking Flat Lighthouse, the little squat shoal light-house of the story. It is a curious little iron structure on open piles, built in 1851, and originally connected with the shore, where the keepers' dwellings were, by a footbridge now partly broken down. An errant schooner carried away a portion of the latter one dark night when half a gale of wind was blowing.

The lighthouse has not been used since the beginning of the great war, and there have been rumours any time these last three or four years, that it is shortly to be demolished. It used to show a beam of white light over the channel; a narrow red beam to mark the position of the "Scars" (a line of rocky patches along the south side of Canvey Island); another red beam to shew the position of West Blyth buoy, and a red band of light over the Mucking Flats. It also carried a fog-bell, sounded every ten seconds in thick weather.

Opposite to the lighthouse, and about half-way across the river, the black and white chequered West Blyth buoy twists round and round in the current. It is moored in two and a quarter fathoms and marks the western edge of the Blyth sands, a vast shoal stretching all the way down the Kentish side to beyond Grain Island, and in places covering fully one half of the total width of the river. With field glasses, you may see the Middle Blyth buoy opposite Hole Haven and in line with Egypt Bay where Pip's convict hulk was. This is a black and white buoy with vertical stripes. Much farther off, the East Blyth, another chequered buoy, warns the mariner of the same dangerous shoal.

Behind us are the flat and dreary Essex marshes, with a distant horizon formed by the Laindon Hills to the north. Although not Pip's own marshes, they are, as he says, very like them in character; a flat region of reeds and coarse grass, with many muddy creeks and ditches; and even twenty years ago with hardly a building of any kind upon it.

I think it would be about five o'clock in the evening of that March day when Pip's boat party pushed off from the stony spit near Mucking lighthouse, and continued their journey. It was harder work now, for the young tide was growing lusty and strong, and the rowers would need to keep well in to the Essex side in order to make any headway.

So they rowed and rowed until the sun went down. The rising tide had by this time lifted the boat a little, and Pip could see the red sun setting on the low level of the solitary flat marsh. This is another clear indication that the boat was following the correct course, and was close to the north shore of the river. From the Kentish side, the setting sun would have been seen over the water, and not over the Stanford-le-Hope or Mucking marshes, as Pip saw it.

I calculate that the sun went down at between five-thirty and six-thirty p.m. Shortly afterwards the night fell fast, and presently it became as dark as it would be until morning; but still Herbert and Startop held on steadily for "four or five dull miles," until Pip descried a light and a roof, which was shortly discovered to be the light and roof of a solitary tavern, by the side of a little stone causeway, at which the party landed.

This was the "Lobster Smack" Inn at Hole Haven on Canvey Island, a little wooden hostelry

White Hart Inn, Greenhithe

with a tiled roof. Approaching it by water, as Pip did, only the roof and one window can be seen, on account of the high sea-wall in front.

The stone causeway, a slippery landing place now but little used, juts out into Hole Haven, a creek or indentation on the west side of Canvey Island. This creek is navigable for small craft from half flood to half ebb, and offers good shelter from all but southerly winds. The channel runs along the east side, so, if you wish to enter the haven when the tide is not at the full, you should not turn into the creek until nearly in line with the sea-wall on that side, or you may run aground on the spit.

Canvey Island is rather difficult of access except by water, and even then you may get wet, when landing or embarking, if a south-westerly breeze is blowing and there is a bit of a sea on. It was a much more isolated place at the time when Pip landed on the stone causeway, although the "Lobster Smack" is still, probably, the most solitary tavern on the lower Thames. This, with a reservation; the place is becoming such a favourite resort for boating and picnic parties that at week-ends and holidays in the summer you may find quite a crowd of people there. This is, no doubt, good for the inn, but I prefer my own visits to be at a less popular time.

Within recent years, quite a colony of bungalow houses has sprung up on the eastern side of the island, but I do not remember that twenty years ago there was anything to be seen on that stretch of marshy coast line, except the tavern and its stables and outbuildings.

The "Lobster Smack" Inn is a building of two stories, and from its upper windows there is a clear view over the marshes and the estuary towards

the Nore lightship which bears south-east by east, half east; its light at night being plainly visible. Hence, looking from his bedroom window, Pip could see the two strangers, who had examined his boat, striking across the marshes in the direction of the Nore.

The upper windows are those of two or three old-fashioned bedrooms (containing Dutch four-poster double beds) all reached from the kitchen by a narrow crooked staircase ending in a long passage. The largest of the upper rooms is now used as a dining room, the west window (that seen when approaching by water), having been converted into an entrance, on the level of the sea-wall, with a little wooden bridge or gangway connecting the two.

Dickens described the interior of the tavern as being a dirty place enough, probably not unknown to smuggling adventures. I daresay the smuggling adventures were true enough, but whatever the condition may have been then, the inn does not now deserve any censure on the score of cleanliness, and Mr. Went is a very obliging host. The inn is a favourite week-end resort of Thames yachtsmen.

I do not know that Dickens ever actually visited the Lobster Smack Inn on Canvey Island, but his reference to the double-bedded rooms is sufficiently correct to suggest that he may have derived his information from the skipper of the steamboat in which he made his voyage of investigation. The inn was probably well-known to the skipper, as it is to most people who regularly use the Thames to-day.

The deep water channel for steamers lies close to Canvey Island, and it was an easy matter to put off from Hole Haven and get into the track of the

Hamburg steamer. It could not have been done from the south side of the river, as the extensive Blyth sands stretch all the way from Lower Hope point to the sea; and a boat would have had to put off from the Kentish side more than an hour before the steamer left London, and then hang about in the channel, against the strong ebb tide, for four or five hours until the ship arrived. So Dickens made good use of his observations and enquiries in May, 1861, and placed the "Ship Inn" of the story on the proper side of the river for the purpose in view.

The easiest way to reach Canvey Island from Gravesend or Tilbury is by motor launch or sailing boat, but I have rowed over that stretch of four or five dull miles, from the squat shoal lighthouse to Hole Haven, under conditions very similar to those in *Great Expectations*; that is, at night and against the flood tide.

I suppose it must be five and twenty years ago, one Sunday at about Easter time, when I was one of a party of three men becalmed in Mucking Bight, and no other craft near. We got through the day as best we might; swimming in the morning, when the tide was up, and lounging most of the afternoon; speaking little, but smoking a good deal of tobacco, and making rather frequent visits to the locker where the bottled beer was kept. There had not been a breath of wind all day, but towards evening a stiffish breeze came up from the sea, raising a bit of a popple on the water, and things began to creak and flap as the yacht curtsied a little at her anchorage.

Whether something went wrong with the house-keeping arrangements, or whether we had been unusually hungry and had made too great an inroad upon the stores, I do not remember, but

at about nine o'clock, the man whose turn it was to be cook that day came up from below and announced in a casual sort of way, as if it were no concern of his, that there was neither bread nor bacon for the morrow's breakfast.

This naturally caused the other two members of the crew to sit up and take notice, and it was at once decided, by a majority of one vote, that the cook should forthwith get himself into the dinghy, my lad, and jolly well fetch the necessary provender from the "Lobster Smack"—the nearest, and indeed, the only source of supply for many miles.

As the tide was making pretty strongly, and the breeze freshening, the cook protested his inability to fetch Hole Haven before the "pub" was closed for the night, unless he had assistance. He also intimated a strong disinclination to injure himself internally for a couple of not too industrious individuals who had not done a hand's turn all day; so I volunteered to accompany him and to take one of the sculls.

I have no doubt that I should have done this the more readily had I known that our trip was to be over the same route as that taken by the boat party of *Great Expectations*, and to the identical inn at which they had found shelter, but at that time, I had no idea of it.

Being the lighter weight, I took the bow oar, but the dinghy was such a cockleshell of a boat that even my modest mass sufficed to depress the prow so that we shipped a good deal of salt water, most of which I caught on the back of my neck. The easterly breeze was also decidedly chilly, and a sopping wet sweater was not the ideal garment under the circumstances.

I do not remember how long it took us to

reach Canvey Island, but I know it was a long stiff pull against the tide, although we kept close into the shore in order to find the easiest water. There were, at that time, no factories or clusters of oil tanks along the river side, and my recollection is that there was nothing to be seen except the flat solitary marshes, with no life upon them, for the whole of the way. The shore was broken by a succession of creeks and muddy headlands, against which the tide flapped dismally. In the half light, which seemed to come from the water rather than the sky, the river appeared to be immensely wide, and our boat the only speck upon it, save when the sailing lights and the ghostly shadow of some distant vessel glided silently by.

However, we eventually rounded the low headland that forms the western end of Hole Haven, and saw the light of the "Lobster Smack" Inn about half a mile ahead. Inside the Haven, we were sheltered from the wind, but as there were then no wooden landing steps, we had to get ashore on the lee side of the slippery and sea-weedy stone causeway. Of course, I had no sooner jumped out, and grasped the gunwale to steady the boat, than a swell rolled along the hard and swamped me up to the knees; but this was so much in the nature of the day's work as to excite no comment, humorous or otherwise.

We found a good fire in the inn kitchen, and yarned with the landlord for a short spell, before departing with our precious provisions; and the run back on the tide was mere child's play.

East of Canvey Island, the Chapman Light—another shoal lighthouse—marks the edge of the extensive Leigh Sands, behind which are the towns of Leigh and Southend, both calling them-

selves "On Sea." The low point of land from behind which Pip saw the four-oared police galley shoot out, just as he and Provis were saying 'good-bye' to Herbert Pocket and Startop, was probably Deadman's Point, a mile or more east of Hole Haven. The advent of that police galley put an end to the expedition, by the capture of Magwitch, and the death of his accuser, Compeyson.

There is only one road on Canvey Island (unless a road has been made to accommodate the new bungalow town at the seaward end, and in that part I have no present interest), and this leads from the "Lobster Smack" inland to Canvey Village, and thence to the ford and ferry at Benfleet, the only communication with the mainland. There is a railway station at Benfleet, on the line from Fenchurch Street to Southend.

Canvey Village is a picturesque little place, with a well, covered by a thatched roof, in the centre; and with a quaint little round house, dated 1620, built by a Dutch settler. I believe the sea-wall round Canvey Island was erected by Dutch dyke-builders at about that time.

Returning to Hole Haven from this little excursion inland, we again take to our boat, for, if we are to follow the river journey of *Great Expectations* to its conclusion, we must row out again into the channel and watch for the Hamburg or the Rotterdam steamer coming down from London.

As we drift a little, and paddle a little, to keep our station in the fairway, a short distance from the shore, we look back over our course of yesterday towards the west, and watch for the steamer's smoke. At length we see it, travelling down the Lower Hope, but "by reason of the bend and

wind of the river" we see, as yet, only the smoke (and perhaps the masts of the vessel), over a stretch of the Higham Marshes.

But now, the steamer rounds Lower Hope Point and comes towards us head on, and presently we make her out to be one of the "Batavier" boats, bound for Rotterdam; so the Rotterdam boat has arrived first.

Whatever might have been done a hundred and more years ago, the chances of the "Batavier" stopping her way to pick up a passenger in Sea Reach are, in this age, very remote, so as we have no wish to follow Pip's boat to the very end, and to go to the bottom of the river, we had better get out of the steamer's way, Her pilot evidently thinks so too, for he gives a hoarse warning blast from the steam whistle.

XI

TO LITTLE BRITAIN & BARNARD'S INN

> " We entered this haven through a wicket-gate, and were disgorged by an introductory passage into a melancholy little square that looked to me like a flat burying-ground. I thought it had the most dismal trees in it, and the most dismal sparrows, and the most dismal cats, and the most dismal houses (in number half a dozen or so), that I had ever seen. A frousy mourning of soot and smoke attired this forlorn creature of Barnard, and it had strewed ashes on its head, and was undergoing penance and humiliation as a mere dust-hole. Thus far my sense of sight ; while dry rot and wet rot and all the silent rots that rot in neglected roof and cellar—rot of rat and mouse and bug and coaching-stables near at hand besides—addressed themselves faintly to my sense of smell, and moaned, ' Try Barnard's Mixture.' So imperfect was this realization of the first of my great expectations, that I looked in dismay at Mr. Wemmick. ' Ah ! ' said he, mistaking me ; ' the retirement reminds you of the country. So it does me.' "

IT was a little past mid-day when Pip arrived in London for the first time, and was deposited by the stage coach from Rochester at the " Cross Keys " in Wood Street, Cheapside. This was a famous inn at that time, but it was demolished somewhere about the year 1865, and I have never seen even a picture of it. Mr. Hayward says the inn occupied the site of the present buildings numbered 129 and 130 ; and I think he is correct, for Horwood's map of 1779 shews what is evidently an inn yard on the same side of the street and a few doors beyond the celebrated old tree of Wood Street that still marks the site of Saint Peter, Chepe, burned down in the great fire

of London. Horwood does not name this inn, but I see no reason to doubt its being the "Cross Keys." According to the Post Office Directory, the "Cross Keys" was at 128 Wood Street.

Pip was bound for the office of his guardian Mr. Jaggers, in Little Britain "just out of Smithfield, and close to the Coach office"—quite a short walk; but the young man hired a hackney coach to take him to his destination. This coach, when it did manage to get going, probably proceeded down Wood Street to Gresham Street, and by Saint Martin's-le-Grand to Aldersgate Street, from which Little Britain turns off on the left hand.

Pip had been packed up in the hackney coach as if he were going on a journey of fifty miles or so, but the route was so short that he had hardly settled down to enjoy the ride before he observed the coachman beginning to get down from the box, and almost immediately afterwards the vehicle stopped at the lawyer's office in Little Britain. Judging from the antiquated character of the coach it was probably a very leisurely journey too; not at all like the pace of the mail-cart that knocked down and injured the little Italian, John Baptist Cavalletto, in Aldersgate Street, when he was seen by Arthur Clennam and accompanied by that gentleman to Saint Bartholomew's Hospital, close by. "It's all along of them Mails" explained a by-stander to whom Clennam appealed for information. "They come a-racing out of Lad Lane and Wood Street at twelve or fourteen mile a hour, them Mails do. The only wonder is that people aren't oftener killed by them Mails."

According to Stow, the antiquaries of his time believed that Little Britain derived its name from the fact that the Earls of Brittany formerly lodged

there. The locality was at one time a centre for book stalls, and Milton's "Paradise Lost" was published here. The story goes that the work lay on the book stalls for a long time without notice, until the Earl of Dorset, poking about in Little Britain, bought a copy. This he sent to Dryden, who wrote a glowing account of its worth.

I am afraid I cannot pretend to guess at which house in Little Britain Mr. Jaggers had his offices, but wherever it was, Pip found on arriving that the lawyer was out, and after waiting for some time in his guardian's private room, which was lighted only by a sky-light, and ornamented by a couple of plaster-cast heads of hanged clients, he went out for a stroll down Little Britain into Smithfield.

At that time Smithfield was an open market, with pens for cattle and sheep, having been paved, drained and railed in as early as 1685. In 1846, nearly 211,000 head of cattle, and 1,518,000 sheep were sold there; but that was later than Pip's period. The City received a toll of one penny for every beast exposed for sale, and one shilling per score of sheep. The market was altered and covered in about the year 1855.

In earlier times, Smithfield, or "Smoothfield" was a place much in favour with theologians for the torture of religious opponents. Here, Henry the Eighth burned to death poor wretches who denied his ecclesiastical supremacy; here, Mary burned protestants, and Elizabeth burned anabaptists; and here also, at the instance of Archbishop Cranmer, was burned at the stake, Joan Boucher, the Maid of Kent, in the reign of Edward the Sixth.

In March, 1849, during excavations for a new

sewer immediately opposite to the entrance to the church of Saint Bartholomew the Great, the workmen laid bare a number of rough, unhewn stones, blackened by fire, and covered with ashes and human bones, charred and partially consumed. Some strong oaken posts, charred by fire, were also dug up; and in one of them there still remained a staple and an iron ring. Evidently, this was the exact spot upon which the Smithfield Martyrs had perished.

Before Tyburn, executions took place at the Elms, Smithfield, between the Horsepond and Turnmill Brook. The gallows was removed to Tyburn about the time of Henry the Fourth.

Dickens refers to Smithfield in several of his books. After their release from Newgate, Barnaby Rudge and his father found themselves in Smithfield.

> "In a corner of the market among the pens for cattle, Barnaby knelt down, and pausing every now and then to pass his hand over his father's face, or to look up at him with a smile, knocked off his irons."

Smithfield had no attraction for Pip—"a shameful place, all asmear with filth and fat and blood and foam"—so he left it, probably by way of Giltspur Street, and came to Newgate, where the mildewed and dirty proprietor of the Lord Chief Justice was so obliging as to shew him where the gallows was kept, and where people were publicly whipped, and the door out of which condemned culprits came to be hanged in the street.

Pip's abhorrence of Smithfield and of Newgate, seems to me to be a reflection of Dickens's own feelings, as expressed in more than one book, chapter, or article.

> "Facing eastwards," he says, in 'On an Amateur Beat,' "I left behind me Smithfield and Old Bailey —fire and faggot, condemned hold, public hangings, whipping through the City at the cart tail, pillory, branding iron, and other beautiful ancestral landmarks."

He lived sufficiently near to those ancestral customs to appreciate their evils to a greater extent than is possible for us in this more enlightened age. In his denunciation of the Old Bailey he was, perhaps, the most scathing, in the second chapter, Book 11 of *A Tale of Two Cities*; but he lost no opportunity of speaking to the same effect in other books.

Newgate was the fifth principal gate in the City Wall, and was a prison for felons as early as the reign of King John. It was destroyed in the Great Fire of London, and rebuilt on a sturdier model. About the year 1779 it had just been enlarged and much strengthened, a fact mentioned by Dickens in *Barnaby Rudge*:—

> "No time was lost in committing the murderer to Newgate, then a new building recently completed at a vast expense, and considered to be of enormous strength."

Nevertheless, it was burned down by the Gorden Rioters in 1780, at which time it contained as many as fifteen condemned cells.

Pip was once taken, by Wemmick, into Newgate prison, but regretted it later, because he went to meet Estella at the Coach-office, feeling that the foul stain of the place was upon him.

There are very many references to Newgate and the Old Bailey in Dickens's works, but to enumerate them is beyond the scope of what I have set myself in this little book. It is no part of my purpose to compile a catalogue of Dickensian references, and I only intend to mention such as

are more or less appropriate, or dictated by my wandering fancy.

Barnaby Rudge contains, perhaps, the most comprehensive allusions to Newgate, with a graphic account of the burning of the prison and the release of the prisoners by the Gordon Rioters.

In one of the condemned cells, Fagin the Jew spent his last night on earth; by turns savagely raving, and bemoaning his fate; while the black stage, the cross beam and the rope waited for him, in the pale dawn, outside.

The "Saracen's Head" where Mr. Wackford Squeers was accustomed to put up when in Town, was "near to the jail, and by consequence near to Smithfield also, and the Compter and the bustle and noise of the City." The Compter was in Giltspur Street, prisoners for debt having been moved there from Newgate, in 1815.

The "Saracen's Head" was a galleried coaching inn near the top of Snow Hill. Its connection with Squeers and Nicholas Nickleby is, however, commemorated by certain statues and mural tablets on a modern building at the corner of Cock Lane, lower down the hill. You must not, therefore, make the mistake of supposing that this warehouse is on the actual site of the old inn. The "Saracen's Head" was at the top, next to the church of Saint Sepulchre, and in the part of Snow Hill then called Skinner Street. The inn was demolished in 1868 owing to the construction of the Holborn Viaduct and the alterations consequent upon that improvement.

The Old Bailey was "famous as a kind of deadly Inn-yard from which pale travellers set out continually in carts and coaches on a violent journey into the other world," and here Charles Darnay was tried for treason—a quartering

matter, as Jerry Cruncher remarked. At the Old Bailey too, a more humble prisoner was called upon to plead to the charge that he, the said Christopher, did feloniously abstract and steal from the dwelling-place of one Sampson Brass, gentleman, a bank note for five pounds, against the peace of our Sovereign Lord the King; and old Tony Weller was under the firm conviction that Mr. Pickwick was to be tried at the Old Bailey for breach of promise of marriage; and had several friends ready to speak either to the prisoner's character, or to prove an alibi; though his strong personal advice was "never mind the character, but stick to the alleybi."

Irish Mike, of the fur cap, whose acquaintance Pip was shortly to make, had similar ideas on the law and practice of evidence. For the inspection of Mr. Jaggers, he produced a villainous-looking tall pastry-cook, dressed in a suit of dirty white linen, much too small for him, and with an incipient black-eye partly painted over. This gentleman was prepared, in a general way, to swear to "Anythink," and particularly, "Ayther to character, or to having been in his company and never left him all the night in question." As it was perfectly obvious that no Judge or Jury would accept a single word offered on oath by such a witness, Mr. Jaggers quite rightly rejected him with indignation.

Having got rid of the Lord Chief Justice's proprietor at the cost of a shilling, Pip returned to Little Britain, and finding that Mr. Jaggers had not yet come in, went into Bartholomew Close.

Saint Bartholomew's Hospital is the oldest in London to retain its original site. It was established in 1544, and refounded by Henry the Eighth for the "continual relief and help of a hundred

Lobster Smack Inn, Canvey Island

sore and diseased" when the adjoining Priory was dissolved. The large pictures of *The Good Samaritan* and *The Pool of Bethesda* on the main staircase of the Hospital, were painted and presented by Hogarth, who was born in Bartholomew Close, and baptised in the Church of Saint Bartholomew the Great.

This is the second oldest church in London, and formed part of the Priory of Saint Bartholomew founded by Rahere in 1123. Only a portion of the original church now remains, but what does remain is a very fine fragment indeed of Norman ecclesiastical architecture, although the Clear-story work is stated to be of later date than the purely Norman work below. In the triforium of the south aisle, there is a very beautiful oriel window, built by Prior Bolton (1506–1532) and known as Prior Bolton's window.

Part of the old Priory buildings existed in Bartholomew Close as late as 1875, but by that time was already put to base uses. The great Hall was actually occupied as a tobacco factory, and even the Lady Chapel of the Priory Church was given over to a printing works. The Lady Chapel has now been restored (1896–1906).

A custom of two hundred and fifty years' standing is still followed, every Good Friday, at the Church of Saint Bartholomew. From a flat tombstone, twenty-one poor widows receive each a new sixpence. Although of late years augmented by other gifts, the new sixpences are provided by a very ancient bequest.

It will be remembered that Mr. Jack Hopkins, Mr. Bob Sawyer's friend, was a medical student at "Bart's"; also that Mrs. Prig, the once dear friend of Mrs. Gamp, was, on the latter lady's asseveration, recommended from Bartholomew's,

or, as some said, "Barklemy's" and others "Bardlemy's."

Looking out of the iron gateway of Bartholomew Close into Little Britain, Pip at length observed Mr. Jaggers coming along, and went to meet him. So did certain little groups of anxious people who had been waiting about for some time; among them, a red-eyed excitable little Jew, "Hown brother to Habraham Latheruth, on thuthpithion of plate," who had been executing a jig of anxiety under a lamp post and chanting in a kind of ecstasy, the words :—

> "Oh, Jaggerth, Jaggerth, Jaggerth!
> All otherth ith Cag-Maggerth,
> Give me Jaggerth."

Years ago, when I first read *Great Expectations*, this doggerel puzzled me exceedingly, but I now know that Cag-maggers or Cag-mag is an old English dialect expression for scrag-ends or inferior pieces of meat. Hence, our excitable Jewish friend meant to imply that all lawyers, except Mr. Jaggers, were inferior, and useless for the purpose of extricating Mr. Abraham Lazarus from an awkward predicament at the Old Bailey.

The iron gate to Bartholomew Close now admits only to the Priory Church, by a graveyard and path where once stood the great Nave of the edifice. The archway of the gate dates from about 1240, and supports an Elizabethan gatehouse. Until a few years ago, this gatehouse was faced with tiles, and probably Dickens knew it in that condition; but during an air raid in 1917, a bomb exploded close by and shook some of the tiles out of position, thereby disclosing the beautiful timber work underneath. The house has now been restored to its original appearance, and we have to thank a German airman for having

inadvertently discovered for us one of the beauties of London.

Returning again along Little Britain to King Edward Street, we see on the left hand a small recreation ground known as the "Postman's Park," the churchyard of St. Botolph. Here, on the wall of a covered arcade are many tablets recording the heroic deeds and self-sacrifice of policemen, firemen, carmen and others of humble station, in saving life.

I suppose these eloquent memorials are known to few of the multitudes who daily throng that busy part of London; but it was a happy thought to place the records where all who will may see them.

What with Mr. Jaggers having been so long away and what with our little excursions into Smithfield and the Old Bailey, we have not yet got very far on our way to Barnard's Inn; but Pip is now to have the guidance of Mr. Wemmick, and that sophisticated gentleman may be trusted to make directly for his objective, even if we ourselves dawdle somewhat in following his footsteps.

All that part of London has changed so much that one cannot even decide upon the route Wemmick would take, unless one knows, to a very few years, the actual date of the walk.

Internal evidence in the book shews that the period of *Great Expectations* corresponds very nearly with the years of Dickens's own boyhood—perhaps a little earlier; and that the action of the whole story (except the events of the last chapter and of the latter part of the penultimate one), took place prior to 1830, and probably before 1825.

At that time the streets were narrower than now; were ill-paved with large cobble stones,

and had only just been gas lighted by flaring open jets at long intervals. Shops and houses were still lighted by oil lamps and candles, gas being considered too dangerous for interior illumination.

There were no omnibuses in the streets (the first omnibus did not appear until 1829), and the hansom cab was still an invention of the future. The chief passenger vehicles were hackney-coaches, chaises and gigs; whilst riding horses were common, even in the heart of the City. Stage coaches were numerous, and the rest of the wheeled traffic consisted of wagons, drays and country carts of various kinds.

As to provision for cleaning the streets, that work was generally left to the rains, fortunately supplemented by the attentions of crossing sweepers, who certainly earned the rewards bestowed upon them by foot passengers crossing the roads in dirty weather.

Holborn Viaduct did not exist in those days, and Wemmick's best and shortest route from Little Britain was probably via Smithfield into Cock Lane and Snow Hill. The last named had to be traversed in any event, to reach Holborn Hill, which ran steeply up the west side of the valley of the Fleet River.

At the bottom of Snow Hill, this river was spanned by the Oldbourne Bridge, which afterwards came to be called Holbourn and Holborn Bridge, and eventually gave its name to the whole locality.

In 1869, the Holborn Viaduct was built, and crossed Farringdon Street at the same place.

Before then, Holborn Hill was an irregular narrow street stretching from the Fleet Market in a westerly direction; very narrow and inconvenient at the north end of Fleet Market, but widening

out from Shoe Lane up to Middle Row, near the south end of Grays Inn Lane. From the Fleet River, or ditch, where Farringdon Street now is, as far as Fetter Lane, it was called Holborn Hill. Beyond Fetter Lane, to Brooke Street, it was known as Holborn. From Brooke Street to Drury Lane, it became High Holborn.

In this part was Middle Row, a line of buildings in the middle of the street, blocking up a considerable part of the passage way, and again reducing the thoroughfare to narrow and inconvenient proportions. This was close to Holborn Bars, near Staple Inn. Middle Row was not demolished until 1868, so that it formed a "Leaden-headed Obstruction" during practically the whole of Dickens's life.

Holborn Bars stood a little to the west of Brooke Street. They marked the limits of the City liberties in that direction, and the carts and carriages of non-freemen were there charged by the Corporation a toll of one penny per cart and twopence per carriage. Holborn Bars, or Gates, were part of the system of toll bars with which Temple Bar and Whitechapel Bar were connected.

Extending from the foot of Snow Hill northwards to Saffron Hill, and parallel with the Fleet Ditch, was Field Lane, a notorious haunt of thieves and receivers of stolen property. In *Oliver Twist*, Dickens described it as it was in 1837, and described it accurately. Here was Fagin's kitchen, receiving shop and school for young pickpockets, but all that part was swept away when the Viaduct was built. Wemmick, acting as Pip's guide, did not deviate into Field Lane, but held on straight up Holborn Hill, the top of which they had nearly reached before Pip dis-

covered that his guide's expansive smile was purely mechanical.

A little before this, they had passed, on the left hand, Saint Andrew's Church, and close by, Thavies Inn, once an inn of Chancery pertaining to Lincoln's Inn, but probably already let out as tenements to all and sundry, as it was when Esther Summerson visited it and found Peepy with his head fixed in the iron railings that still embellish these old houses.

Just beyond Saint Andrew's Church is Holborn Circus—now ornamented with a statue of the late Prince Consort, presented to the City by an anonymous donor in 1874. The two sitting figures on the base of the statue represent History and Peace.

There was no Holborn Circus in Pip's day, but I mention it because Hatton Garden (famous for diamond dealings), runs from it northwards; and off Charles Street, which intersects Hatton Garden, you may still find Bleeding Heart Yard, where lived Mrs. Plornish and Mr. Plornish, who found it so difficult to get work; and where John Baptist Cavalletto found shelter. The yard takes its name from a former inn of some importance, whereof it was the inn-yard; not the public-house called the "Bleeding Heart" in Charles Street, but an old-fashioned good old inn dating from before the Reformation. In *Little Dorrit*, Dickens mentions that the Bleeding Heart was the heraldic cognisance of the ancient family that formerly owned the property, but that this legend was universally scouted by the Bleeding-Heart-Yarders themselves, who held by a much more romantic origin of the name. It was a very good thing that the inhabitants of such a drab and squalid locality could invest their surroundings

with some little touch of romance and poetry; and I suspect Dickens put in that little bit purposely, in order to enlist our sympathy and heighten our interest in regard to the poor but kindly denizens of the Yard.

A little farther along Holborn, we come to the region of the Inns of Court, on both sides of the way: Gray's Inn and Furnival's Inn on the north side; Barnard's Inn, Staple Inn, and Lincoln's Inn on the south. All these Inns have many associations with Dickens's books, but Barnard's Inn alone is referred to in *Great Expectations*, and any detailed account of the rest would, therefore, be out of place here.

Mr. Snagsby, law stationer, lived in Cook's (or Took's) Court, Cursitor Street, and Cursitor Street is reached by Furnival Street, on the south side of Holborn. It is worth mentioning that Cursitor Street is so named after the Cursitor's Office, an Inn founded by the father of Lord Bacon. Stow remarks:—

> "In this street the great fair building to be noted on the east side is called the Cursitor's Office, built with divers fair lodgings for gentlemen, all of brick and timber, by Sir Nicholas Bacon, late Lord Keeper of the Great Seal. Cursitor is said to be a corruption of Chorister, which seemeth the more probable because anciently all or the most part of the Officers and Ministers of Chancery (or Court of Conscience) were churchmen, Divines and Canonists."

Readers of *Bleak House* will probably have come to the conclusion that the Court of Chancery had ceased to be Court of Conscience even in Dickens's day, whatever it might have been in earlier times.

The Inns of Court are a fascinating subject, but I must come to the only one that really concerns us, though it is the least important of them all. I want, however, to digress a little more, to say

that I should very much like to find the "Slap-bang" eating house patronised by Messrs. Guppy, Jobling and Smallweed. I confess to having foraged around once or twice to that end, especially up little courts and alleys in the neighbourhood of Chancery Lane, but I have never yet found the right place. To begin with, the boxes and settles have all disappeared, and the bills of fare are all wrong. I see no marrow puddings on any menu, and yet marrow puddings were a standing dish at legal dinners for ages. During the Old Bailey sittings, the dinners provided by the Sheriffs, at three and five o'clock in the afternoon, invariably consisted of beefsteaks and marrow puddings. The Judges relieved each other in Court, and therefore dined either at three or at five; but some of the Aldermen in attendance, and also the jolly old Chaplain, attended both functions. It is recorded that the latter official thus partook of two heavy dinners per day, for a period of ten or twelve years without damaging his digestion, but was eventually pensioned off as a martyr to duty—and I do not wonder at it.

Further, I have not sufficient assurance to summon the modern representative of Polly the waitress by an expressive hitch of the eyelashes—lest my meaning should be misconstrued—nor dare I total up my indebtedness to the establishment in the airy manner of Mr. Smallweed; as, for example, "One veal and ham is one and six, and one potato is one and ten, and one summer cabbage is two and four, and one marrow pudding is ——."

No! I meekly wait until the lady has leisure to attend to me, and then I ask for a bill, which she silently makes out on a printed pink form, after-

wards folding the paper neatly in two and laying it beside my plate with a murmured "thank you!"

The nearest approach that I have made to Mr. Smallweed's favourite establishment is a certain tavern in Holborn, not far from Chancery Lane, where you may collect from a central bar "two hams" or "three germans" or "one chicken," or whatever you fancy, and carry these yourself, together with a glass of something innocuous, to a wooden table and a Windsor chair in a corner of the sanded room. But even this lacks something, and needless to say, marrow puddings are unknown!

Barnard's Inn is on the south side of Holborn, a little to the west of Fetter Lane, and a wicket gate admits you to what Pip thought was the dingiest collection of shabby buildings ever squeezed together in a rank corner as a club for Tom Cats. I have quoted Pip's impressions of the Inn at the head of this Chapter. Joe Gargery's opinion of the place was even more uncompromising:—

> "'Which I hope as you gets your elths in this close spot. For the present may be a wery good inn, according to London opinions,' said Joe confidentially, 'and I believe its character do stand i; but I would not keep a pig in it myself—not in the case that I wished him to fatten wholesome and to eat with a meller flavour on him.'"

Dickens himself seems to have had a very poor opinion of the Inns of Court generally, to judge by his article on "Chambers" in *The Uncommercial Traveller*. Speaking of the Adelphi, and Bedford Row, he says:—

> "But the many waters of life did run musical in those dry channels once—among the Inns never. The only popular legend known in relation to any one of the dull family of Inns, is a dark Old Bailey whisper concerning Clement's, and importing how

the black creature who holds the sun-dial there was a negro who slew his master and built the dismal pile out of the contents of his strong-box—for which architectural offence alone he ought to have been condemned to live in it. But, what populace would waste fancy upon such a place, or on New Inn, Staple Inn, Barnard's Inn, or any of the shabby crew?"

And yet, the Inns of Court seem to me to be replete with interest, and even Barnard's, the smallest and shabbiest, conjures up visions of older times and older customs, and forms a fascinating backwater within sound of the roar and bustle of Holborn.

Barnard's Inn is the smallest of the old Inns of Chancery appertaining to Gray's Inn. It was formerly known as Mackworth's Inn, the property having belonged to Dr. John Mackworth, Dean of Lincoln, in the reign of Henry the Sixth, and the Arms of the Inn still remain those of the Mackworth family—Party per pale, indented ermine and sables, a chevron gules, fretted or.

At the time of its conversion into an Inn of Chancery, the property was occupied by a certain Barnard, from which circumstance it has been known as Barnard's Inn ever since. In the time of Elizabeth, there were one hundred and twelve students in residence during term time, and twenty-four out of term. In 1885, there were still eighteen members of the Inn, including the Principal, the Ancient, and the Companions.

By an order made in November, 1706, two quarts of wine were allowed to each mess of four men going through the ceremony of initiation. This was an extra allowance, in addition to the usual quantity of ale and sherry allotted as part of the regular dietary.

During the No Popery Riots of 1780, Barnard's

Inn narrowly escaped destruction, for next door was Mr. Langdale's distillery which the mob sacked and set on fire. A certain Dr. Warner, who spent the night in his chambers in Barnard's Inn, wrote the next morning to George Selwyn, and said the staircase, on which his chambers were, was not yet burned down, although it could not be much worse for him if it were. The fire at the distillery burned until six o'clock that evening, but Barnard's Inn luckily escaped any very serious damage.

About 1800, Peter Woolfe, F.R.S., resided at No. 2 Second Floor Chambers, Barnard's Inn. He was the last true believer in Alchemy, and his chambers were so crowded with experimental furnaces and apparatus, that it was difficult to move about, or to reach the fireside. Woolfe had a strong dislike of medical men, and his heroic treatment for all ailments was to journey to Edinburgh and back as an outside passenger on the stage-coach. On the last of these expeditions, he contracted a chill, from which he died.

The Hall of Barnard's Inn is the smallest of the London Inns of Court. It measures thirty-six feet long ; twenty-two feet wide ; and thirty feet high ; but, small as it is, it is a very fine old hall, formerly containing portraits of Lord Chief Justice Holt, sometime Principal of the Inn ; Lord Burleigh, Lord Bacon, Lord Keeper Coventry and others.

In 1894, Barnard's Inn was taken over by the Mercers' School, and since then it has had no connection with its former purpose.

I omitted to mention earlier that the near-by coaching stables that faintly moaned " Try Barnard's Mixture " were probably the stables of the " White Horse " in Fetter Lane, or those of the " Black Bull " in Holborn—perhaps both.

M

XII

FROM KINGSTON TO THE CITY

> "A bell with an old voice—which I dare say in its time had often said to the house, Here is the green farthingale, Here is the diamond-hilted sword, Here are the shoes with red heels and the blue solitaire—sounded gravely in the moonlight, and two cherry-coloured maids came fluttering out to receive Estella."

KINGSTON has no more than a slight connection with *Great Expectations*, being mentioned therein once only. Magwitch had just come out of Kingston jail when he first met the worse criminal Compeyson at Epsom Races. He had been imprisoned on a vagrancy committal, ("not but what it might have been for something else; but it war'nt").

Compeyson himself resided "over nigh" Brentford, and Arthur (Miss Havisham's half-brother), lived at the top of the same house, Compeyson keeping a strict account against him for board and lodging, in case he should ever get better and able to work it out.

The western suburbs of London have changed so much since then that it is quite impossible even to guess at the whereabouts of Compeyson's house, especially as Dickens gave no real indication of its position. I might hazard suggestions as to the position of Mrs. Brandley's staid old house at Richmond; and the possible whereabouts of Mr. Mathew Pocket's establishment at Hammersmith; but such can only be conjectures, inasmuch as the whole aspect of those places has been radically altered during the last hundred years.

BARNARD'S INN
(*From an old print*)

Estella's "lesson" was that there are two Richmonds, one in Surrey and one in Yorkshire, and that hers was the Surrey Richmond; whither Pip accordingly escorted her, to the house of Mrs. Brandley—a staid old house by the green, "where hoops and powder and patches, embroidered coats, rolled stockings, ruffles and swords had had their court days many a time." There were some ancient trees before the house, "still cut into fashions as formal and unnatural as the hoops and wigs and stiff skirts."

This old house, which, if it were ever haunted, must surely be haunted by Pip's ghost, was probably one of the ancient mansions in Maid of Honour Row. Here Pip visited Estella, and often took her, with the Brandleys (mother and daughter), upon the river, or to picnics, operas, concerts, and parties of all sorts of pleasure, through the course of which he pursued her, though they were to him all hopeless miseries.

On his arrival in London, Pip was taken by Herbert to Mathew Pocket's house at Hammersmith. The two went down by coach and arrived in the neighbourhood at about two or three o'clock in the afternoon, having then only a very little way to walk to the house. Lifting the latch of a gate, they passed at once into a little garden overlooking the river. At that time, a row of detached houses stretched westwards from the bridge and formed the Mall, once the most fashionable part of Hammersmith. The residences faced the water, and their front gardens reached to the river bank, along which were clusters of stately elm trees. Perhaps one of these houses was the establishment of Mathew Pocket, run chiefly by the servants, with the strong approval of the dustman and to the satis-

faction of the marine store dealer in the back street.

It was at Hammersmith that Herbert Pocket first met his sweetheart, Clara Barley, when she was completing her education at an establishment there, before she went to tend her father at Mill Pond Bank.

At the time when Pip studied under Mr. Pocket at Hammersmith, Brandeburgh House (in which Queen Caroline, the unhappy wife of George the Fourth, resided for a time, and where she died in 1821), was still standing by the riverside. The building was demolished shortly after Caroline's death.

Leigh Hunt, who served very largely as the original of Harold Skimpole, in *Bleak House*, lived in a small domicile at Hammersmith, and died there in 1859. Forster wrote of him :—

> " Any kind of extravagance or oddity came from Hunt's lips with a curious fascination. There was surely never a man of so sunny a nature, who could draw so much pleasure from common things, or to whom books were a World so real, so exhaustless, so delightful."

The journey from Hammersmith to Soho was by a country road when Pip travelled over it. That road is now a part of the teeming Metropolis, and as I find hereabouts no vestige to associate it with the romantic coach journey undertaken by Pip and Estella I pass quickly to Gerrard Street in Soho, north of Leicester Square.

Being of a somewhat inquisitive turn of mind, I pause here a moment to enquire " Why Soho " ? There is a legend to the effect that " Soho " was the Duke of Monmouth's watchword at the battle of Sedgemoor in 1685 and that the word

was applied by his party to the square in which was the Duke's town house. This story is a reversal of the facts. "Soho" certainly was the watchword at Sedgemoor, and the Duke did live in King's Square, as it was then called; but King's Square was in the district of Soho, which was so named fifty years and more before the battle; so the Duke really took his watchword from the district in which he lived. Consequently, my question is still left unanswered and I confess that I can find no satisfactory reply.

In Gerrard Street lived the astute criminal lawyer Mr. Jaggers, in a house on the south side; "rather a stately house of its kind, but dolefully in want of painting." The interior of the residence is described with sufficient detail to suggest that Dickens had in mind some actual house, with a bare stone hall, a dark brown staircase and a suite of dark brown rooms on the first floor, ornamented with carved garlands on the panelled walls.

In Dickens's young days, when he lived in Bayham Street, Camden Town, his mother's eldest brother, Thomas Barrow, resided at No. 10 Gerrard Street, where the boy sometimes called. Thomas Barrow, who was, or had been, a fellow clerk of John Dickens at Somerset House, occupied the upper part of the Gerrard Street premises, which belonged to a book-seller named Manson. The Manson family, attracted by the appearance of young Dickens, during the visits referred to, lent the boy various books to read, much to his delight; and it is very likely that this was the house with the dark brown rooms on the upper floor, that was afterwards assigned to Mr. Jaggers.

From Covent Garden Market, where he could get it fresh, Herbert Pocket bought the fruit for

the first dinner of which he and Pip partook at Barnard's Inn. Covent Garden is referred to several times in *Great Expectations*. The "Finches of the Grove" held their meetings and spent their money foolishly at an hotel in Covent Garden; which hotel I think was the "Piazza," on the site of the present rather old-fashioned Tavistock Hotel, at the north side of the market. There was, in those days, another hotel, at the south-east corner, known as "Hummums." At one time there were two establishments of that name, known respectively as the "Old Hummums" and the "New Hummums," but which of them Pip visited I do not know. The peculiar name was a corruption of the Eastern word "Humoum," which seems to indicate that these establishments originally started as Turkish Baths.

Returning to the Temple late one night, after walking all the way from Rochester to tire himself out and relieve his agony of mind, Pip received, at the Whitefriars gate, Wemmicks mysterious message "Don't go home," and, making his way to Fleet Street, got a late hackney-chariot and drove to the Hummums in Covent Garden, where a bed was always to be got at any hour of the night.

Although Covent Garden has no very important place in *Great Expectations*, it is referred to by Dickens in other books very frequently indeed, and is a truly Dickensian neighbourhood. The Uncommercial Traveller started nearly all his wanderings from his rooms in Covent Garden, or more strictly, from his rooms at the office of *All The Year Round* in Wellington Street; and I have noticed that Dickens always presents the place in one of two aspects, either very dark, or very bright. In the *Uncommercial Traveller*, he says:—

"I can slip out of my door in the small hours after any midnight, and in one circuit of the purlieus of Covent Garden Market can behold a state of infancy and youth as vile as if a Bourbon sat upon the English Throne; a great police force looking on with authority to do no more than worry and hunt the dreadful vermin into corners, and there leave them."

In another place he says :—

"One of the worst night sights I know in London is to be found in the children who prowl about this place; who sleep in baskets, fight for the offal, dart at any object they think they can lay their thieving hands on, dive under the carts and barrows, dodge the constable, and are perpetually making a blunt pattering on the pavement of the piazza with the rain of their naked feet."

In *Our Mutual Friend*, he describes how the attraction of the market drew to it Mr. Dolls, who had out his two fits of the trembles and the horrors in a doorway where a woman had just accomplished her sodden sleep. Here Mr. Dolls was butted, and leapt at and pelted by the young savages who usually swarmed about the place, largely for the purpose of thieving fragments of orange boxes and mouldy market litter, which they carried away to their obscure holes, making but little sound with their bare feet.

Close to Covent Garden was the dreadful and pestilent hemmed-in burial ground where "Nemo" was interred in a pauper's grave. This place has hitherto been identified as a closely hemmed-in burial ground that formerly lay behind Russell Court, and was approached by a passage-way under a house in that Court. It is now claimed, on the authority of a letter written by Dickens in 1868, that Nemo's graveyard was the place, now converted into a recreation ground, at

the corner of Russell Street and Drury Lane. By the side of the gate in Drury Lane there is a mortuary, belonging to the parish of Saint Martin's-in-the-Fields, that looks as if it might have been there in the time of *Bleak House*; but the reeking little tunnel and the iron gate at which Lady Dedlock met her death, are said to have been in Crown Court, off Russell Street.

The burial ground in Drury Lane certainly seems to be indicated by Dickens's letter to Miss Palfrey, but a picture of the place published in the *Illustrated London News* in 1849 shews that the present wide gateway and wall were in existence at that time, and that the graveyard was no more hemmed-in than it is now. In the town plans of the period, I cannot find any indication of a passage way from Crown Court, or any entrance other than the gateway in Drury Lane; and the place seems to me to less accurately fit the description in *Bleak House* than did the now-vanished burial ground in Russell Court.

But, as I have already noted, Dickens sometimes presents Covent Garden in a brighter aspect. Ruth and Tom Pinch had many a pleasant stroll there, "snuffing up the perfume of the fruits and flowers, wondering at the magnificence of the pineapples and melons; catching glimpses down side avenues of rows and rows of old women seated on inverted baskets shelling peas." And six o'clock in the morning saw David Copperfield in the Market, buying a magnificent bouquet for the object of his affections, on the day when he was to go to Dora Spenlow's birthday picnic.

Again, in *The Old Curiosity Shop*, Dickens describes the market at sunrise in the spring or summer; the fragrance of the sweet flowers scenting the morning air, and driving a thrush,

whose cage had been left outside a garret window all the night, frantic with joy.

Arthur Clennam had a lodging in Covent Garden, and as he sat solitary one night, looking at the fire from which the blaze had departed and the after-glow subsided, and the ashes turning grey and dropping into dust, his door was softly opened, and Little Dorrit stood upon the threshold. She had come to thank the gentleman whose identity she was not supposed to know, whose generosity had released her unworthy brother from the Marshalsea.

Covent Garden was originally the Convent Garden, an enclosure belonging to the Abbots of Westminster in the tenth century. The property came into the possession of the Duke of Somerset at the dissolution of the religious houses. On the Duke's attainder in 1552, it was given by the Crown to John Russell, Earl of Bedford, being then described as the "Convent Garden lying in the parish of Saint Martins in the Fields next Charing Cross, with seven acres of land called Long Acre."

The present market was built by the Sixth Duke of Bedford in 1830.

The piazzas or colonnades of the earlier square were almost unique in English architecture, and at one time, the houses over them were highly fashionable residences. Between 1660 and 1700, the Earls of Oxford, Bedford, Sussex and Peterborough, and the Marquis of Winchester, all possessed town houses over the Covent Garden piazzas. Later, the Piazza Hotel was a favourite resort of Richard Brinsley Sheridan and his friends. The Bedford Coffee-house at the north-east corner of the piazza, was rendered famous in connection with Garrick, Foote, Sheridan and others who foregathered there.

Essex Street, leading down to the river from the Strand, was where Provis was lodged after his return to England to see the gentleman he had made, and before he was transferred by Wemmick and Herbert Pocket to Mill Pond Bank. Here the ex-convict was accommodated at a respectable lodging house, that had back windows looking over Fountain Court in the Temple. I have already mentioned Pip's lodging in Garden Court, but a few more words on the Temple and its Dickens associations may not be out of place.

What Dickensian can walk through Fountain Court without being reminded of the meeting of Ruth Pinch and John Westlock by the merry fountain—quite by accident? In Pump Court, Tom Pinch worked for his mysterious employer, and in King's Bench Walk, Sydney Carton worked in a different manner, with a wet towel tied round his head to cool his fevered brows.

Overlooking the Temple Churchyard were the chambers of Mortimer Lightwood and Eugene Wrayburn, where the dismal Young Blight sat at the most dismal of the dismal windows commanding a dismal churchyard; and contrived to relieve the monotony of his existence by ringing the changes on the names of imaginary clients, his employer having no clients whatever, except Mr. Boffin.

The history of the Temple goes back to the twelfth century, the Knights Templars having moved here from Holborn in 1185. The Order was abolished by Pope Clement the Fifth in 1312, and Edward the Second granted the Temple to the Earl of Pembroke, who surrendered it to the Earl of Lancaster. Lancaster let it to the Professors and Students of the Common Laws, who gradually became an organised and Collegiate body.

The entrance to the Middle Temple is a gate-house built by Wren in 1684. The Inner Temple gateway was built in the time of James the First. Pip received Wemmick's message, "Don't go home," at the eastern gate, leading to White-friars. The Hall of the Middle Temple is very fine, with a hammerbeam roof, a carved oak screen, and a serving table made from the timbers of Drake's famous ship, the "Golden Hind"; but perhaps the most interesting building in the Temple is the famous round church, the original building of the Knights Templars, and said to be one of the finest specimens of ecclesiastical architecture in England.

Doctor Johnson, Charles Lamb, and Oliver Goldsmith all lived in the Temple at one time or another. The last named was buried in the graveyard overlooked by the window of Young Blight.

Passing out of Middle Temple Lane, we reach Fleet Street, which has many Dickensian associations; but this famous thoroughfare receives only casual mention in *Great Expectations*, and I must not wander too far off the track.

The Geographical Chop-house, where Pip and Herbert sometimes dined, and where there were maps of the world in porter-pot rims on every half-yard of tablecloth, and charts of gravy on all the knives, was probably near the Exchange, to which Herbert occasionally resorted in disconsolate mood. All that district has recently been subjected to very great changes, and the old taverns and chop-houses have practically all disappeared, to give place to modern palatial office buildings. Very soon the landmarks so dear to the heart of the Dickens topographer will all have vanished into the limbo of the past.

The small metropolitan theatre, where Mr. Wopsle achieved a questionable triumph, was in the waterside district beyond the Custom House and the Tower, and was possibly the old Royalty Theatre in Wellclose Square; but, as Pip himself said, "It is nowhere now."

There are many buildings and places, home and foreign, that are made use of in *Great Expectations*, but which I have not touched upon in the foregoing pages; partly because some of them receive only brief or casual reference, and partly because the buildings, in some cases, have disappeared entirely and cannot now be pointed out; or the indications in the novel are insufficient to guide me to any conclusions as to their probable origin. Places such as Paris, Marseilles, and Cairo hardly come within the scope of what I have called "The Great Expectations Country."

However, I give over-leaf a fairly comprehensive list of the topographical features mentioned by Dickens in the work under consideration.

THE "SQUAT SHOAL LIGHTHOUSE"
(MUCKING FLAT LIGHTHOUSE)

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